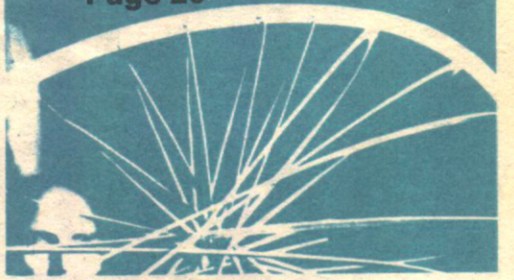


# IN THESE TIMES

The Russian avant-garde  
Page 20



VOL. 6, NO. 5

DECEMBER 9-15, 1981

\$1.00

# Critical



The fast growing  
European peace movement  
regards the Reagan  
proposals with skepticism,  
and insists that  
they don't go  
nearly far enough.



# Masses

Shell-shocked mayors  
contemplate the  
future of the cities.  
Page 7

**Twisting slowly  
in the wind**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



# THE INSIDE STORY

1983, it seems reasonable to expect the first degree of rallying around the old flag—either Labour or Tory. Projections now are that each of the three groups might have 200 seats in the Parliament—the alliance rather more and the Tories rather less. The constitutional duty of the Queen in that case would be to appoint a prime minister who can bring together a parliamentary majority.

## Socialist is hardly the word.

What would actually happen? It is difficult to envision an agreement between the new alliance and Labour, given the bitterness between Labour people and the Social Democrats—who are seen as renegades—and given also the increasing strength of Tony Benn's left-wing supporters. But if the Tories were to ditch Mrs. Thatcher and abandon her rigidly monetarist policies, a deal with the alliance is far from impossible. Already Edward Heath, Mrs. Thatcher's greatest enemy and

shop. Sixty percent of the Social Democrats favor a compulsory ceiling on wage increases. A rather slender majority favors higher taxation to improve spending on welfare and would also like to see a wealth tax. There is a 76 percent vote against unilateral nuclear disarmament and a 92 percent vote for British membership in the European Economic Community. In this list, the wealth tax is the only issue that might stick in the throats of Tory negotiators.

## Labour's future is not bright.

As we peer into an uncertain future, we can see two possibilities. The British have a traditional preference for a two-party system. If the Tories come out of the next election as the smallest party and cease to be the official opposition, they may be heading for political extinction. With the alliance taking on its present coloration, nobody needs the Tories as the rescuers of capitalism.

Alternately, we might see Labour pushed to the sidelines and reduced to a hard core of its most committed supporters. Such a prospect is appalling for socialists, but it could happen.

But the third possibility is that the era of the two-party system may be drawing to an end, and future parliaments may be composed of three sizeable parties and several minor ones. Governments would then be formed by coalitions or as the outcome of a deal, which is the accepted situation in several other European democracies.

Prospects for a Labour victory are fading badly. Following the party's October conference, Michael Foot carried hopes of ending the internal conflict of the last year. He told delegates that he envisaged giving major responsibility both for the opposition front bench and in a future Labour government to right-winger Denis Healey and also to Tony Benn. But when parliament met, Benn made a speech in conflict with that made two hours before by a right-wing front-bencher Merlyn Rees. Foot reached the conclusion that Benn was not prepared to work as a team in charting parliamentary strategy. Reversing his previous attitude he urged MPs not to vote for Benn as a front-bencher in the session. And Benn duly failed to get elected. The quarrel that has torn Labour apart throughout 1981 is definitely prolonged into 1982. Clearly this disunity greatly hampers the party's standing with the voters.

The press, overwhelmingly hostile to Labour, is pulling out all the stops to depict Benn as a fanatical extremist while Foot is shown as an ineffective compromiser mainly trying to hold his party together. At Crosby, Shirley Williams took up the cue and described the Social Democrat-Liberal alliance as a crusade against extremism. Not many people in Britain or anywhere else want to say that they are voting for extremism. So long as this situation prevails the SDP is on a winning streak.

Mervyn Jones, former *In These Times* London correspondent who now writes for the *New Statesman*, has been filing a series of reports on British politics.



Drawing by David Levine reprinted with permission of New York Review of Books, NY Rev. Inc. © 1981

Shirley Williams' victory in the Crosby by-election underscored the growing strength of Britain's new party.

## Sun may set on a two-party Britain

By Mervyn Jones

LONDON

The Social Democratic Party, making the most irresistible progress of any new group since the Beatles, has chalked up an impressive victory in the Nov. 26 by-election at Crosby. It was the fourth proof of strength since summer for the new party. First, Roy Jenkins won a good second place at Warrington, an industrial town regarded as bedrock territory for the Labour Party. Then a Liberal fighting with SDP support won at Croydon, a London suburban district where Labour and the Tories had been evenly balanced. Next, an SDP candidate won a narrow victory at Pantnas in the heart of London. (This was for a seat in the Greater London Council, not the House of Commons, but the boundaries and the electorate are the same.) And now Shirley Williams has triumphed at Crosby, hitherto among the top 50 safe Tory seats.

The remarkable feature of this record is its consistency, because the four widely varied districts make up a full range of the British political map. Crosby is in the outer commuterland of Liverpool. Part of the district is working class, but it mostly contains the comfortable homes of people in the upper social brackets, many of them elderly or retired. With 80,000 voters on the rolls, the Tory majority in May 1979 was over 19,000.

Mrs. Williams won 28,000 votes, or 49 percent of the total, giving her a margin of 5,000 over the Tory candidate. This means that she must have drawn away one Tory voter in every three. The Labour candidate saw his supporters dwindle from 15,000 to 5,000—a disaster for the opposition party at a time when it should be making a strong challenge to an unpopular government.

Each of these victories adds cement to the Social Democratic-Liberal alliance, which now must be considered unbreakable. Social Democrats and Liberals are working on a regional basis and dividing up the seats in readiness for the next general elections to insure that in no case will they oppose each other. It makes sense to regard the alliance as a single political party in direct competition with what had until now been the two major parties.

By the time a general election is called, probably in

the standard-bearer of the Tory moderates, has said that he would seek a way of coming to terms with the alliance.

In the interview that he gave after Crosby, Heath said that he could never actually join the Social Democrats because he is not a socialist. But Roy Jenkins has said that he has not used the word socialist in years, and it is Jenkins, despite his inconvenient lack of a parliamentary seat for the moment, who is the likeliest prospect for alliance leader. Certainly there is nothing socialist about the policies now being forged by the Social Democrats, who confine themselves to proposing a calculated dose of inflation to bring down unemployment—an anathema to Thatcher, but acceptable to many Tories.

A recent poll of Social Democrat Party members gives a good indication of their attitude. A heavy majority favors a law to make unions liable for financial damages if they conduct sympathetic strikes. Such a law is now being drafted by the present government and is bitterly opposed by the unions and the Labour Party. A similar majority favors outlawing the closed

## Power to the paper

If you tried to reach *In These Times* last week—and failed—it's because a power failure on the west side of Chicago intermittently blacked out both electricity and phone service at our offices. Because our typesetting equipment was down much of the week, the paper was mailed two days late and may be late in reaching you.

(ISSN 0160-5992)

## IN THESE TIMES

The Independent Socialist Newspaper

Published 42 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, fourth week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June, July and August by The Institute for Policy Studies, Inc., 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60622, (312) 489-4444. Institute for Policy Studies National Offices, 1901 Q Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.

### PUBLISHERS

William Sennett James Weinstein

### EDITORIAL

Editor  
James Weinstein

Associate Editors  
John Judis, David Moberg

Culture Editor  
Pat Aufderheide

European Editor  
Diana Johnstone

Assistant Managing Editor  
Josh Kornbluth

Staff: John Echeverri-Gent, Jim Steiker, Editorial Assistants: Kate Fuller, Emily Young, Interns.

Correspondents: Kate Ellis (New York), David Fleishman (Tokyo), Robert Howard (Boston), Timothy Lange (Denver), David Mandel (Jerusalem), James North (Southern Africa).

West Coast Bureau: Thomas Brom, 1419 Broadway #702, Oakland, CA 94612, (415) 834-3015 or 531-5573.

### ART

Co-Directors  
Ann Tyler, Dolores Wilber

Assistant Art Directors  
Paul Comstock, Nicole Ferentz

Composition  
Jim Rinnert, Diane Scott

### BUSINESS

Associate Publisher  
Bob Nicklas

Business Manager  
Elizabeth Goldstein

Circulation Director  
Pat VanderMeer

Advertising Director  
Bill Rehm

Outreach Coordinator  
Angie Fa

Staff: Arlene Folsom, Anne Flanagan, Assistant Circulation Directors: Aaron Frankel, Beth Maschinot, Circulation Assistants: Anne Ireland, Bookkeeper: Debbie Zucker, Office Manager: Grace Faustino, Cadging Manager: Paul Ginger, Classified Advertising: Karl Rysted, Intern.

Sponsors: Robert Allen, Julian Bond, Noam Chomsky, Barry Commoner, Al Curtis, Hugh DeLacy, G. William Domhoff, Douglas Dowd, David DuBois, Barbara Ehrenreich, Daniel Ellsberg, Barbara Garson, Emily Gibson, Michael Harrington, Dorothy Healey, David Horowitz, Paul Jacobs (1918-1978), Ann J. Lane, Elinor Langer, Jesse Lemisch, Salvador Luria, Staughton Lynd, Carey McWilliams (1905-1980), Jacques Marchand, Herbert Marcuse (1899-1979), David Montgomery, Carlos Munoz, Harvey O'Connor, Jesse Lloyd O'Connor, Earl Ofari, Seymour Posner, Ronald Radosh, Jeremy Rifkin, Paul Schrade, Derek Shearer, Stan Steiner, Warren Susman, E.P. Thompson, Naomi Weinstein, William A. Williams, John Womack, Jr.

The entire contents of *In These Times* is copyright ©1981 by Institute for Policy Studies Inc., and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Complete issues of *In These Times* or single-article reprints are available from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI. All rights reserved. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index. Publisher does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All correspondence should be sent to: *In These Times*, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. Subscriptions are \$23.50 a year (\$35.00 for institutions; \$35.00 outside the U.S. and its possessions). Advertising rates sent on request. All letters received by *In These Times* become the property of the newspaper. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form. Second class postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

This issue (Vol. 6, No. 5) published December 9, 1981, for newsstand sales December 9-15, 1981.



## IN THESE TIMES

# Dissent tones down the call to arms



By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**T**HE GERMAN THEATER IS getting to be a crowded stage. First of all, there are all those weapons piling up, with more on the way. Then there are those growing crowds of people protesting against all those weapons. And now there are Americans and Russians meeting in Geneva to talk about all those weapons and blame each other.

The interplay between the three different levels—arms race, peace movement and international negotiations—is complex and uncertain. Unlike revolutionary movements, where people try to take charge of their own business, protest movements call on the powers that be to do something. It is in their very nature to be “coopted,” “recuperated.” The governments concerned are thus all trying to recuperate the current peace movement, to turn it to their own advantage.

As the target of the movement in his own country, Helmut Schmidt has yet managed to turn it to his advantage in his dealings with the United States; the Americans had better be good to him or he will fall. The Christian Democratic alternative looks less appealing to American leaders since a recent party congress showed that latent “nationalism” and “pacifism” were lurking there, too. And if the Social Democratic Party were thrown into the opposition, its peace wing might take over and lead it triumphantly back to power.

Some observers suspect that the European theater is only a shadow stage. Hardly anyone seriously believes in the “threat of Soviet invasion” that is NATO’s *raison d’être*. Everyone knows the Russian tanks massed in Eastern Europe are there to keep the local folks in line, not to invade Western Europe, where they could easily be destroyed by highly effective non-nuclear anti-tank weapons.

And Poland is the clincher. “How can anyone still talk about a possible Soviet aggression in Europe?” asks Polish-born Marek Tuma, director of the Oslo Peace Research Institute. “The USSR is not even capable of holding its own empire together. They’re not managing to control Poland. Do you think for a minute they believe they could control France?”

The declared strategic objectives of leading U.S. policy makers are to induce Europe to take care of its own defense, and to shift American operations toward the Middle East, where the makings of war really exist. And these things are happening.

The hair-raising statements in Washington about limited nuclear war in Europe have not only sent hundreds of thousands of people into the streets in protest. They have also induced such ruling establishment figures as British Field Marshal Lord Carver to come out and admit that NATO strategy has always been to use “theater nuclear weapons in a first strike to conquer a conventional invasion,” and that this strategy “has been terrible and irrational for over 20 years, ever since the Soviet Union gained the capability to answer back in kind.”

Lord Carver and others are now criticizing, on moral and military grounds,

NATO’s longstanding assumption that Soviet superiority in conventional forces justifies plans to initiate nuclear warfare. For one thing, it is obvious that Western Europe is more populous and much richer than the USSR and could match its conventional armaments if it tried. All this may be leading toward something Henry Kissinger and others have been after for a long time: greater Western European military expenditures and self-reliance.

## Not-so-silent steps.

NATO’s policy-making High-Level Group is reviewing nuclear arms systems in Europe with a view to getting rid of battlefield nuclear weapons (which would appease the peace movement) about the time the longer-range Pershing and Cruise nuclear missiles are introduced. The review is called “the Shift Study”—

does the “shift” from tactical atomic weapons for a “limited nuclear battle” in Europe to a nuclear strike force targeting the USSR perhaps correspond to what top Pentagon consultant Edward Luttwak meant when he said in August 1980 that the Reagan administration would try for “silent incremental steps” to correct NATO’s “severe problems of doctrine and tactics”?

And who is to say that the neutron bomb has not been intended all along not for Europe at all but for Arabian and Persian oil fields?

With all eyes riveted on the European theater, the U.S. has been trying out its Rapid Deployment Force in Egypt, and has persuaded Francois Mitterrand to offer French troops for the Sinai peace-keeping force, followed by Britain, Italy and the Netherlands.

In Geneva, the Russians will be talk-

ing about arms control with some of America’s leading champions of increased military spending, notably Paul Nitze, who invented the arms race in 1950 when he was the State Department’s top policy planner, and helped revive it in the 1970s through the Committee on the Present Danger. Nitze sees the Soviet threat everywhere, and most particularly (as he wrote in *Foreign Affairs* last year) in the “now-emerging possibility that the Soviet Union may offer to join West Germany and France in joint negotiations with Persian Gulf suppliers for long-term oil-purchase contracts in adequate volume and at stable prices.” Nitze worried that West Germany and France might “see advantages in negotiating in partnership with the Soviet Union rather than as an opponent.” This would “not be unrealistic” on their part, he conceded.

Continued on page 22



## But the movement has grander goals



By Diana Johnstone

BONN

**P**ART OF THE GERMAN PEACE movement held a big birthday party in Dortmund Nov. 21. The occasion was the first anniversary of the “Krefeld Appeal” calling on the Bonn government to take back its consent to the NATO decision to station American nuclear missiles on West German soil. The crowd of over 20,000 that filled the Dortmund auditorium for eight solid hours of speeches and star-studded entertainment cheered at the announcement that the Appeal had gathered over two million signatures.

The goal is to “make it politically impossible to station Pershing-2 and Cruise missiles in the German Federal Republic.”

It was a passionate gathering, carried

Here and above; peace marchers in Bonn

to its emotional peak by Harry Belafonte and a South African black singer who brought people to their feet chanting “international solidarity” and singing “We Shall Overcome” in English.

Another high point was Auschwitz survivor Esther Bejerano singing the hymn of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in Yiddish, with the crowd joining in the chorus.

E.P. Thompson was there, expressing solidarity and embarrassment at not being able to speak German. Less embarrassed, Tony Benn of the British Labour Party’s left wing declared that “Europe must not allow its future to be decided by President Reagan and the Senate in Washington or by President Brezhnev and the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. We did not elect them, we cannot remove them, they do not speak for us nor have they any right to determine our future.”

Benn called on “the whole of Europe to begin to work together to create a nuclear-free zone and a security system that ultimately replaces both NATO and the Warsaw Pact.”

“The peace movement in Western Europe, like the freedom movement in Eastern Europe, represents a constructive initiative for the future of our continent and of the world,” he said.

The right to be emotional about life and death issues was explicitly asserted by Protestant theologian Uta Ranke-Heinemann, who observed that “some people’s feelings understand more than other people’s brains.” Fear of nuclear war is not irrational or selfish, she said, it is “essentially a fear for others, for everyone.”

One emotion that distinguishes the German movement from the peace movement in the rest of Europe is guilt. “Never again shall war threaten Eastern Europe from German soil” is a frequent theme. Guilt for the 20 million Soviet dead in World War II is the emotion that enabled the German Communist Party (DKP) to turn part of the long Dortmund program into a sentimental “welcome to Brezhnev” on the eve of his arrival in Bonn for talks with Schmidt. The DKP has obviously thrown its some 40,000 members and organizational skills solidly behind the Krefeld Appeal, which is why some SPD figures like Erhard Eppler have refused to sign it, though they agree with the general idea. The ecological “Greens,” Protestants and other currents that make up the bulk of the movement welcome DKP participation in opposition to the sort of Cold War ostracism that produced *Berufsverbot*. Still, the movement risks being weakened in the long run by the German Communists’ tendency to try to pull it towards alignment with Moscow.

Nobody took Reagan’s “zero-option” offer seriously, other than as a sign of the

Continued on page 10



# IN SHORT

## Words to live by

"Things are not as bad as they seem," a prominent Buddhist lama from Tibet advised his American listeners a few summers back. "They're worse."

In that spirit, "In Short" financial correspondent George Lowrey warns of the blight at the end of the tunnel, economywise. Already, says Lowrey, the signs are clear that the economy that emerges from the current recession will be more concentrated and more unequal than in pre-recession times. Take small and medium-size businesses—please. Bankruptcies at that level are up 42 percent over last year. Meanwhile, the oil giants and other financially strong companies have been buying up recession-weakened companies at a breakneck pace. And the gap will widen as sales continue to drop, because smaller firms cannot borrow as easily as their larger kin and have been slower in taking advantage of Reagan's tax gifts.

The recession's push toward greater inequality is also evident among individuals: Real personal income is rising, but so is the number of people living below the poverty line. That means longer lines outside both Studio 54 and the unemployment office.

## Haig strikes again

If you want to get hold of a recent copy of *Granma* or any other Cuban publication, there seem to be two ways to go about it. You can go to Cuba and pick it up. Or, as required by the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of 1963, you can apply for a special license from the U.S. Treasury Department. Actually, the regulations, originally designed to keep money from flowing into Castro's coffers, were never applied to written materials until this past May, when the U.S. Customs Service suddenly impounded thousands of newspapers and magazines on their way from Cuba to groups and individuals here. For some reason, the newly enforced rule even covers free subscriptions.

After much clamor, the folks at Treasury agreed to make the licensing procedure more palatable to wild-eyed advocates of First Amendment rights—but Alex Haig's State Department nixed the compromise. So on Nov. 24 more than 100 recipients of Cuban literature, ranging from a Massachusetts state assemblyman to scholars to farmers to *The Nation* magazine, filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Boston. The plaintiffs asked the court to reassert the American right to read anything from anywhere, without permission or license. Next they'll want to stay up past their bedtime.

## Bucks for bombs

While higher education faces a tight state and federal budget squeeze, one funder of research is growing ever more benevolent—the Department of Defense (DoD). "In Short" stringer Brooks Egerton has been reading *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, which recently reported that Pentagon spending on campus will rise 24 percent in fiscal 1982—from \$258 million to nearly \$320 million—after having more than doubled since 1975. "There's a movement now to re-establish our commitment with the universities, because we need them," Jimmie Suttle, the DoD's assistant director for research, told *The Chronicle*.

But the military, of course, cannot thrive on weapons alone. Egerton notes that the Defense Intelligence Agency has earmarked \$500,000 for the study of African languages and cultures next year, though the DIA might have trouble spending the money. *The Chronicle* reports that a recent meeting of African studies representatives from American universities expressed unanimous rejection of cooperation with the agency; the scholars are afraid to jeopardize their African contacts, which are said to be strong even where official U.S. relations are strained. Still, while official ties may be ruled out, says Patrick Bennett, chair of the department of African languages and literature at the University of Wisconsin, unofficial liaisons with the DIA can easily be formed—already a common practice in the fields of the natural sciences and engineering.

## If they only had a brain

Good news: If there's a nuclear war, at least one print of *The Wizard of Oz* will survive—though such a situation might render the popular *auteur* theory somewhat superfluous. *American Film* (via Pacific News Service) reports that mine owners have convinced film companies to turn over original copies of their classic pictures for storage 650 feet underground, just in case of a natural or unnatural disaster. The idea has already caught on at MGM, Columbia and Disney. Toto, I think we're not in Kansas anymore.

## Where'd he go wrong?

The Heritage Foundation, reports PNS, has issued its first annual report card on the Reagan administration. The conservative Washington think tank says the president has implemented only 60 percent of the conservative goals the foundation proposed last year. "I may have gone to a tougher school," comments a Heritage spokesman, "but where I come from 60 percent is not a 'C.'"

—Josh Kornbluth



During the "mourning" stage at the Pentagon

## The Pentagon was all tied up

WASHINGTON—Nearly 3,000 women came to the Pentagon on Nov. 16 to disrupt business-as-usual for the second "Women's Pentagon Action." There were 65 arrests, including three for smearing women's blood on the pillars at one entrance. Demonstrators came from the Northeast as well as from Ohio, Kentucky, Georgia, Iowa, Missouri and even England, Holland, Italy, Wales, Australia and Denmark. The Pentagon, home of the Cruise and Pershing missiles, has an international reputation.

"It's much more our problem," explained Flavia N'Anolzeamatto. "Your military bases are in my town, my country. They've built new nuclear missiles in front of Qaddafi and if something happens, the first place to go will be the town where my family lives in Sicily. Your president says we don't understand, but come on, it's our life."

"Sure it's not our Pentagon," said Liney Seward from Wales, "but it's not our Cruise missiles, either. We're very much in the hands of the Pentagon."

"We women are gathering," reads the Women's Pentagon Action Unity Statement, "because life on the precipice is intolerable."

A little after dawn on Nov. 16 the women marched through Ar-

lington Memorial Cemetery to the Pentagon. This was no typical demonstration—even the occasionally astute press didn't know what was happening and there was little coverage outside Washington. In the first "stage" of the ritual-protest, women planted their own symbolic tombstones on the lawn of the



During the final, "defiance" stage

Pentagon to mourn male oppression and the military: "For my mother, who died in a self-induced abortion, 1964." "In memory of the three women killed by my son in Vietnam, 1967."

Mourning was followed by the "rage" stage—shouting, yelling, fists in the air—and then the "empowerment" stage, when women encircled the Pentagon. "In mythology, the only shape stronger than a pentagon is a circle," said Megan McLemore, a student at New York University Law School. In the last stage, "defiance," some of the women blocked entrances to the Pentagon with their bodies and a "web of life," as one put it—colorful yarn tied between the bannisters and doors and trees and anything else to prevent access. "Every time you cut it, I'm going to keep re-tying it," a woman told a federal guard. A roll of yarn nearly hit him (gently) on the head. "It's a real mess," he said, smiling.

"We have so much creativity," said Maria ter Steeg, from Women for Peace in Holland, who later spoke at a more traditional rally of 500,000 in Amsterdam against nuclear arms on Nov. 21 (the largest rally in Dutch history, according to the *New York Times*). "You have a ritual here. You are participating together in a sort of drama. I learn from it." —Susan Jaffe

## Whitmire wins Houston race

HOUSTON—The *New York Times* summed it up best before Houston's recent mayoral runoff election. "It's the widow and the sheriff," a *Times* story started, referring to the Nov. 17 runoff between Kathy Whitmire, the 35-year-old two-term city controller, and Jack Heard, 63, the down-home sheriff of Harris County ("In Short," Nov. 18). Whitmire, a liberal on social issues and a fiscal conservative, and Heard, an all-round old-guard conservative, two weeks earlier had upset two-term



Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. Please include your address and phone number.

mayor Jim McConn and beat out a field of 12 other candidates to win spots in the runoff.

As it turned out, the *Times*' Old West analogy proved quite apt: in the days just before the election, the campaigning got downright sleazy, with most of the mud being fired at Whitmire over her endorsement by the city's well-organized Gay Political Caucus. But when the shooting stopped and the mud cleared, it was Whitmire who was the victor. The widow had downed the sheriff.

The runoff battle revolved around three issues—one relevant question and two off-the-wall items. One: how to improve city services. Two, which candidate was most willing (or unwilling) to meet in a public debate. And three: whether a victory by a gay-supported candidate would turn Houston into a liberal pillar of evil.

OK. The first issue was easy to resolve: Both Whitmire and Heard supported varying degrees of growth restraint as a way to improve services in existing parts of town. Two also was easy: The candidates finally met in a televised debate the night before the runoff. But number three... well, that one generated a lot of heat and even more muck. Mailgrams and tabloid "newspapers," with messages such as "Houston becoming a gay mecca for homos," were circulated around town in an effort to rouse an anti-gay bloc vote for Heard—who, by the way, disavowed knowledge of the effort. Things got downright fierce by the time election day rolled around. Two *Houston Chronicle* newsmen, attempting to trace the origin of the Mailgrams, were fired on by a shotgun-wielding real estate investor when they tried to interview him.

The anti-gay hate campaign, though, seems to have backfired. Whitmire picked up 62 percent of the vote, far outdistancing Heard to become the city's first woman mayor. She credited the anti-gay campaign with creating a backlash that contributed to her landslide victory.

So the gunfight's over and the widow's in. Whitmire has shown that a calm, businesslike approach can win voters. Residents have shown that they are tired of unfettered growth and poor services. The Gay Political Caucus has shown that it is a force to be reckoned with in local politics. The city's voters will be swayed no more by scare stuff and mudslinging. And Houston... well, Houston is still Houston. Big and growing. But perhaps not as frenetically now.

—Wade Roberts

## An iron fist on the West Bank

JERUSALEM—As they are often called upon to do, Israeli soldiers spent much of Nov. 7 chasing around the West Bank after Palestinians who were trying to demonstrate against the occupation and the plan for "limited autonomy." But in a departure from the routine, the soldiers this time were also involved in policing Israelis who crossed into the territories for the same purpose.

Early in the morning, a crowd of about 600 gathered at the city

hall in Ramallah, about 20 kilometers north of Jerusalem, to protest the closure three days earlier, for the nth time, of nearby Birzeit University. The school had been put under siege by the army on Nov. 4 after demonstrations ("minor" ones, according to the university) and alleged stone-throwing in and around the campus. Palestinians had been trying to express their feelings about the imposition of a so-called civilian administration, headed by a professor from the Hebrew University.

Soldiers are still very much present in the West Bank when it comes to "keeping order," and while several of them were kept busy breaking up the Ramallah rally, pursuing participants out of the windows of city hall and through the streets, about 150 Israeli students, professors and other peace activists were converging on a prearranged location a few blocks from Birzeit University itself.

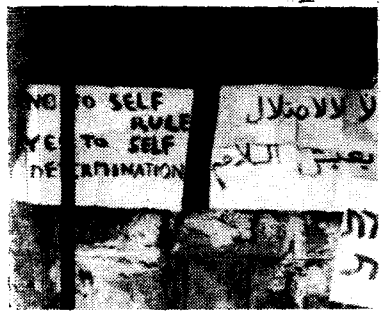
At noon, they unfurled signs, began chanting slogans for the school's reopening and marched past a single surprised army patrol, climbing a wall to enter the closed campus. There, a teach-in ensued on the meaning of the closure and on ways to continue bringing the issues before the Israeli public. Finally, when military reinforcements arrived, the protesters agreed to leave peacefully—there were still several thousand leaflets in Arabic to be disposed of.

On the way back to Jerusalem, the leaflets were passed out in the center of Ramallah, where a sympathetic population gladly facilitated their distribution, to the chagrin of the soldiers. The harsh oppression commonly employed against Palestinian demonstrators was spared the Israelis.

But as Israeli peace forces met to plan further acts of solidarity, the well-known iron fist did clamp down on the West Bank, despite the newly declared "civilian administration" there. At least a dozen well-known journalists and public figures were rounded up for interrogation or put under house arrest the night of Nov. 9. Included was Birzeit's acting president, who was supposed to have met reporters the next day, and several other faculty members and students. A major Arabic daily paper was ordered shut for 10 days as well.

Besides the stone-throwing allegations, the military has repeated its consistent charge that Birzeit and other West Bank academic institutions have become more involved in hostile agitation than in learning. But a committee of Hebrew University lecturers recently disputed this version in a lengthy report on the lack of academic freedom in the occupied territories. On the question of closing schools for "preventive" reasons, the report said, "In most cases it is difficult to tell where prevention ends and punishment begins."

—David Mandel



## Briefing: Cuts that won't heal

Women and children first, please. Then the elderly. The handicapped and mentally ill are next.

These are not the chivalrous orders of a captain during a disaster. Rather, it's the order in which federal funding cuts to health care programs are likely to be felt. Indeed, when it comes to health services for the nation's most vulnerable citizens, the so-called safety net is badly torn already. And it could easily be in tatters by 1984.

Consider these figures: Maternal and child health program funds were slashed by \$125 million—from \$456 million to \$331 million—this year. Community health centers' funds were cut from \$327 to \$260 million. Medicaid is reduced by 3 percent this year, 4 percent next year and 4.5 percent the next. Mental health funds have been cut by one-fourth. Medicare beneficiaries will pay even more out-of-pocket before they can collect their skimpy doctor and hospital benefits, which have also been reduced.

How do those figures translate into human terms? Just look at how they affect children from poor families. Some 360 community health centers, a source of health care to about 800,000 children, are expected to close. About 12,000 children in Virginia alone are expected to lose Medicaid coverage. The American Public Health Association predicts some 2,000 infant deaths nationally from cutbacks in nutrition programs.

These estimates are based on the federal budget reductions, which are just the first step in the new daisy chain of cuts set up under the administration's "new federalism." With new flexibility in the Medicaid program, and with new block grants, the states are proving themselves even more adept than Congress at poking holes in the "safety net" programs.

Georgia is typical. There, state legislators took a 3 percent cut in Medicaid funding

and deepened it to 10 percent this year. Like other state governments, Georgia made use of the new "flexibility" to reduce services and the number of people eligible for them. For example, Georgia has chosen to limit the number of prescription drugs allowed to Medicaid patients to six each year. Most nursing home residents, who depend on Medicaid and need more than eight prescriptions a year (on the average), will be forced to make up the difference from their \$25 monthly personal allowance.

Indeed, with states given a free hand at reducing Medicaid spending, the elderly, the handicapped, the working poor and children can expect to see cuts everywhere at least as bad as those in Georgia. Even before the federal cuts, at least half the states were having trouble paying their share of Medicaid. Many had already resorted to dipping into other programs, such as education, to keep Medicaid afloat.

States are also beginning to slash programs through allocations awarded via the new "block grants." Under this new system, several health programs are thrown into a single block grant, and overall funding is reduced by at least one-fourth. The maternal and child health block grant, for example, includes lead paint poisoning prevention programs, adolescent health programs, childhood hemophilia treatment projects and a host of other programs that once received their own money in direct "categorical" grants. Now each program will have to fight the others in the governor's office or in the state legislature for a piece of the ever-smaller pie.

Congress and the Reagan administration have not been content with just cutting the direct benefits and programs. They have launched an even more concerted attack on agencies that keep an eye on

how our health dollars are spent. Health planning agencies, which have given a voice to some 40,000 consumers in planning local health care, have taken a cut of a third this year, and the administration proposes defunding them completely by 1984. A similar fate has befallen the Professional Standards Review Organizations, groups of doctors that oversee the quality and cost of care given to Medicaid and Medicare patients in hospitals.

Perhaps the most ridiculous aspect of all these cuts in health funding is that few people expect them to save taxpayers much money. When people are sick, they need treatment, and they will seek it at public hospitals when all other doors are closed. In Georgia, the "savings" in Medicaid are expected to cost public hospitals \$14 million this year.



Hospital officials everywhere note that when Medicaid payments to private hospitals decline, they'll do what they've done in the past—charge other patients more to make up the difference.

Even in the face of such outlandish economics, there have been few victories for the grass-roots groups fighting the cuts. Massachusetts consumer and elderly groups were able to turn back a proposed state-imposed "cap" on Medicaid spending. Yet, as Mark Klieman, director of the Consumer Coalition for Health says, such victories are few and far between, and the victors often feel that they're simply "putting lipstick on the corpse."

—Betty Holcomb  
Betty Holcomb is a New York-based freelance writer who specializes in health issues.



# IN THE NATION

## IMMIGRATION

# Good fences make unrealistic policy

By Thomas Brom

SAN FRANCISCO

**J**UST NORTH OF THE GOLDEN Gate Bridge, small Marin County towns hug the foothills and rim the water's edge. There are of course an abundance of hot tubs, riding and biking trails, white wine bars for grown-ups and country day schools for the children. But hidden behind the latest condominium development is a growing population of undocumented Mexican workers. They are hired by light manufacturing firms here and throughout the Bay Area because they are abundant, reliable and give "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay."

One such employer, owner of a ceramic business employing 60 workers, agreed to talk openly as long as his company name wasn't used. "I'm not afraid of prosecution," he says, "I just don't want my workers hassled."

His experience provides a glimpse into the thriving underground labor market that the AFL-CIO refuses to acknowledge and even the Reagan administration cannot control.

"I hire Mexicans because they are good workers—it's as simple as that," the owner says. "They show up on time and don't fool around. The upper-middle class kids around here are terrible workers."

The shopowner hired his first Mexican-American 20 years ago. Later the worker found a job for his cousin, and through him, most of the others came.

"The Mexicans here are from Michoacan, and one way or another they're all related," the owner says. "The whole system runs on nepotism. When I need more help, somebody's cousin appears on my doorstep."

Unlike most shops in California that hire undocumented workers, this pottery, tile and dinnerware business is under union contract. It was organized eight years ago by the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), a move that was "almost welcomed" by the owner because it established work rules and grievance procedures. The pay varies from \$5 to \$10 an hour depending almost entirely on seniority.

Unlike most other trade unions, the ILWU has little interest in the nationality of the workers it organizes. "We don't ask those questions," says Luisa Gratz, an organizer for the huge amalgamated Local #26 in Southern California. "We'll organize anybody, anyplace."

Just before Labor Day, the Marin County ceramic shop had its first run-in with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. "I fired a local white kid for the second time in a year," the owner says, "and he said he'd get me." Three days later, the INS arrived with a paper listing the name of every Mexican in the shop. Most of them ran away, but INS caught four and took them away in handcuffs.

The four Mexicans were driven by bus 600 miles south to Tijuana, where it took them only about an hour to make the payments and get back across the border. They spent the Labor Day weekend on the beach in San Diego. By Tuesday morning they were back on the job in Marin County, having lost a day-and-a-half's pay but otherwise "cheerful," according to their employer. The owner has not been fined—for now, there are no federal penalties for hiring undocumented workers—and the INS has not been back.

The California legislature passed a law penalizing employers for hiring illegals, but because the toothless federal law takes precedence, no one here bothers to prosecute. Ten other states also have laws against hiring foreign workers. In the past decade only one employer in the nation has been fined, and that was for \$250.

### Coming home.

The U.S. border with Mexico, which extends 1,900 miles from Tijuana to Brownsville, has, since 1848, served as a transition zone between Anglo and Latin culture and a cheap migrant labor market for U.S. growers. But in the past decade, Mexico's internal economy has been torn apart and recast by foreign capital and industrial growth. Villagers

## Economic factors will keep workers moving across the border regardless of new penalties.

the largest minority group in the country.

Still, nearly two-thirds of the U.S. Latin population remains clustered in the five Southwestern states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Colorado—the same region held by Mexico generations before. "Mexicans have never emigrated to the Southwest," Carey McWilliams wrote in 1948. "They have returned."

Mexican workers, with papers and without, now move across the border in a daily commute to jobs in the U.S.

The pressure to stay and work—especially when much of the economy and culture simply ignores the border—is enormous. As of Jan. 1, 1980, the Immigration and Naturalization Service held a backlog of 380,000 immigrant visa applications from Mexican citizens hoping to be among only 20,000 chosen each year. Millions more have arrived on foreign visitor forms and never returned—the INS admits it has jumbled 30 million such forms, and won't know who has entered or left the U.S. until 1983.

Latinos are now 28 percent of the population in Los Angeles, and will be the largest ethnic group in the city by 1984. Latino children comprise 50 percent of the students in the L.A. public school system. The vice-mayor has said that without Mexican workers in the Los Angeles garment, electronics, hotel and restaurant industries, the local economy would crumble.

Yet there is still a border, and a futile attempt to defend it. More than eight million undocumented workers have been arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol in the past 20 years—nearly one million arrests in 1980 alone. The Chula Vista sector, headquartered in San Ysidro and responsible for 66 miles of boundary from Tijuana to El Centro, has apprehended an average of 300,000 Mexican workers a year since 1977. It is not unusual for the Border Patrol to catch the same migrants several times on the same night.

Meanwhile, a thousand miles away, Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wy.) gavelled his

close roads and deal with people "as the attorney general wishes."

Other provisions—the guest-worker program, more money for the Border Patrol, employer civil sanctions and a complicated amnesty program—have been widely reported. Sen. Simpson wants to throw in a national I.D. card for every American worker—a measure seconded by the AFL-CIO.

"The quasi-military language of the bill paints a picture of a nation besieged," says Amit Pandya, an attorney for the Washington office of the National Center for Immigrant Rights. "The interdiction program and emergency powers legislation are major concessions to Florida over the Haitian refugees. The rest of the bill is a victory for western employers who like a docile, low-cost work force. It is designed to create workers without rights."

Reaction to the Omnibus Immigration Control Act has ranged from predictable outrage to mild disapproval of the harshest measures. "Immigration policy is always closely related to the U.S. economy," comments John Huerta of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). "If the current recession is bad, we expect a restrictive law; if not, Congress will push the guest-worker program. For us, the results are equally bad."

No one seems pleased by the proposed law. Civil rights groups like the National Center have focused on the many violations of due process in the bill. Chicano organizations, led by MALDEF, are concerned that employer sanctions will quickly translate into discrimination against all Chicano workers, regardless of legal status. The AFL-CIO denounced the entire plan, calling instead for criminal sanctions against employers who hire illegal workers.

### The gaping holes.

The problem—if it is a problem—is that none of the proposed measures has a prayer of significantly changing an un-



The Texas Farm Workers Union is one of several labor groups that have been organizing on both sides of the border.

are being pushed off the land by agribusiness in Sonora and Sinaloa, starved in the central states along the Sierra Madre and drawn to the factories along the U.S. border, in Mexico City and at the rim of the oil-rich Campeche Bank in the Gulf.

Suddenly sleepy Mexico has 70 million people looking for work, and only a line drawn in the dirt divides old Mexico *sur* from Mexico *norte* of the ancient Aztec homeland. The migration northward began in earnest in the last 10 years.

Latinos—60 percent of Mexican descent—now represent the fastest-growing third world population in the U.S. The 1980 census counted 14.6 million and missed an estimated five million illegal workers, 50 percent of them Mexican. By 1990, according to official census projections, Latinos will pass blacks as

Immigration and Refugee Subcommittee hearings to a close for the Christmas recess. While Sen. Kennedy groused, Simpson had called a parade of experts on European guest-worker programs that may serve as a model for President Reagan's proposed 50,000-worker experiment.

Sen. Kennedy's program—the final report of President Carter's Select Committee on Immigration and Refugee Policy—had been virtually ignored by the committee, even though it was barely six months old and took three years to prepare. Instead, the committee took as its reference the Omnibus Immigration Control Act, released Oct. 22, codifying the Reagan proposals.

Among other things, provisions of the bill allow the president to declare an "immigration emergency," permitting the government to stop and reroute vessels,

derground labor market that functions very well indeed. The employers get a cheap and reliable workforce for jobs ranging from stoop labor to kitchen help. Mexico, with an underemployment rate approaching 50 percent, is relieved of surplus workers. U.S. trade unions can maintain the fiction of upholding wages and working conditions, while an army of the unorganized slip beneath the contract floor. The migrants themselves work at miserable conditions by U.S. standards, but often earn seven times the minimum wage in Mexico for a shorter work day.

The Immigration Control Act, according to Pandya, will simply increase the financial and human cost of immigration to the foreign worker. But despite the added hardships, it will not halt the

Continued on page 8



## CITIES



As if their localities weren't already hit badly enough by the Reagan budget cuts, delegates learned that David Stockman has more in store.

# Mayors turn the other cheek

By John Judis

DETROIT

**I**F LAST WEEK'S CONGRESS OF THE National League of Cities—the country's major organization of local officials—is any indication, then those politicians who stand the most to lose from the Reagan administration's budget and tax cuts are still not ready to form a united front against the president.

But many of the more than 1,000 delegates to the Congress, including some Republicans, are beginning to question the Reagan administration's budget priorities—its decision to reduce social expenditures in favor of increases in defense spending. And they are deeply worried about their cities, which are caught in a crossfire of reduced federal grants and reduced local revenues, on the one hand, and growing poverty and decaying or yet-to-be-built sewer systems and mass transit systems on the other.

The strongest opposition to the Reagan administration came from the black, Hispanic and Northern city officials. "We have to deal with some of the bad things that are going on in the society," Fort Wayne, Ind., city councilman John Ducko told the National Black Caucus/League of Election Officials, "and one of the worst is Reaganomics."

Maria Cavala, a newly elected city council member from San Antonio, warned Spanish-speaking delegates against the "mayor that says the '80s is our decade." "He wants to be a prophet of doom," Cavala said, "but I fear what is going to happen under the present administration."

New York City's Mayor Ed Koch, who ran on a bipartisan ticket during his recent re-election, surprised a luncheon audience by the vehemence of his attack on the administration. "The administration's program imperils the cities and is wholly lacking in realism and responsibility," Koch said.

But there were also murmurs from Republicans at the Congress. Indianapolis Mayor William Hudnut III, the outgoing president of the League, told the delegates that "the administration must be willing to understand what fairness is all about, and that there are limits beyond which the cutting ought not to go." Hudnut hinted that the defense budget should be the target of the next cuts.

Vermont Governor Richard Snelling, chair of the Governors' Conference, who described himself as a "conservative Republican," said that "we must bring spending under control, but it matters at what pace it is accomplished." Snelling remarked that he thought the budget could be balanced "without further at-

tacking state and local governments." Asked to clarify how, Snelling told *In These Times* that he would make cuts in defense. "I know it is an awkward subject for anyone to talk about. I am for spending every dollar that is needed. But I don't think it is logical to say there is no waste in defense."

## Mayors in shock.

But the League's delegates were unwilling to put their doubts and fears into resolutions. "Virtually no one would say in a single sentence that they opposed the cuts," New York City Council member Ruth Messinger, a member of the League's board of directors, said. "Everyone here is a little bit in shock."

Burlington, Vt., Mayor Bernard Sanders submitted a resolution in favor of the administration and Congress "drastically reducing" military spending, but it was "indefinitely postponed" by the resolutions committee, a parliamentary means of avoiding even a public debate on the issue. Sanders left the Congress disgusted. "I had doubts about spending Burlington's money in coming here," he said. "But it confirmed my feeling that 99 percent of people here are living in a world removed from reality."

Most of the delegates were torn between their respect and support for the president and their fear of the budget cuts' effects on their cities. "I'm a registered Democrat, but I support most of what the president's doing," Howard Walton, a black alderman from a small Chicago suburb, said. "I just think he's doing it too fast. It's like a person has two cars, and instead of taking them away one at a time, you take both away."

Ed Bernstein, a Portland, Me., city councilman, told a workshop on the "Infrastructure," "I've never seen a crisis like this in 19 years. The wealthy are getting wealthier, the poor are getting poorer and the middle is getting its back broken." But asked later what he thought of the Reagan programs, Bernstein told *In These Times*, "It is too early to tell. He's very sincere, and I think he should be given the chance."

## The decaying infrastructure.

Some of the officials, particularly from northern cities, expressed concern over the cuts in human services. "The withdrawal pains that millions of Americans will endure could very well turn out to be the Achilles' heel of the president's new federalism," Cleveland's Republican Mayor George Voinovich said. But the most widespread and common concern was the cuts' effects on the cities' roads, sewer systems, ports and bridges—its infrastructure.

There was a tactical reason for this.

Misery is no longer a call for action among the populace, but the discovery of barriers to economic growth is. Business and labor, blacks and whites, pro-choice and pro-life can unite on the threat to American's future posed by potholes, cracked bridges and overloaded sewer systems.

The key test is infrastructure," Mayor Hudnut told the Congress. "If we are to bring about the urban investment that is greatly needed, we will need the resources to restore the urban infrastructure."

The infrastructure crisis hits the Sunbelt and Frostbelt alike. Where northern cities have to repair or replace about one-fifth of their bridges and one-fourth of their transit systems, Dallas needs \$700 million for new water and sewage facilities over the next decade, and Hous-

was proposing the elimination after 1983 of the Community Development Block Grants and the Urban Development Action Grants, two of the remaining programs that fund city public works.

In several workshops, local officials speculated about where they could get the \$660 billion that the Urban Institute estimates will be needed for infrastructure investment over the next 15 years. The recession has reduced their local revenues. Local residents have become increasingly unwilling to approve tax increases. Competition with the federal government, which has to borrow to finance its deficit, and the Federal Reserve's tight-money policy have driven up the interest rates on and the costs of local bond issues. And new federal tax laws, which make stock and all-savers bond purchases more attractive, make tax-exempt municipal bonds less attractive. "I will not float any bond issues because I can't afford it," Pittsburgh Mayor Richard Caliguiri said.

## The Reagan response.

The administration angered the League's directors by refusing to send a major representative to the Congress. The delegates had to content themselves with Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), the head of the President's Commission on the New Federalism, and several minor officials. Their attempts to explain the administration's program visibly confused some of the Congress participants and angered others.

"I know a major concern you have is that if the responsibility for programs is given to cities, then the funds should be given to them also," Laxalt told the Congress. "But let us not forget that block grants are only a transitional step to eliminating block grants altogether and have the federal government give up its taxing resources to the states."

Speaking to the officials' concern that high interest rates were driving cities out of the bond market, Laxalt assured them that the reductions in federal spending "would reduce the federal government's competition with the lower levels of government. If this progress goes on, it will get us out of the bond markets."

Laxalt seemed to be arguing that by cutting the cities' funds, the administration was preparing the way for a transfer



George Voinovich, Cleveland's Republican mayor, warned that social cuts could become the president's "Achilles' heel."

ton and other Sunbelt cities do not have modern mass transit systems. "When you hear about prosperity coming to states with oil and gas," Oklahoma City Mayor Patience Latting told a workshop, "I want you to remember that there are some of us who have to spend a great deal and plan 30 or 40 years ahead to get water to our communities."

The Reagan administration's budget cuts came entirely from the 5 percent of the federal budget that includes funding for 50 percent of the nation's public works spending. This portion of the budget was subjected to 25 percent across-the-board cuts, and the administration now wants a further 12 percent reduction. As the League's Congress drew to a close, the participants learned that Budget Director David Stockman

of funds in the form of "taxing resources" and was making it easier for cities to borrow on the bond market. But as several local officials remarked later, the "taxing resources" could only be realized by local tax increases, which in the present circumstances were extremely difficult to achieve. As for the government and the bond market, it now appears that the federal deficit—and so the need to borrow—will be as great as ever because the cuts in social spending hardly made up for the tax cuts and the increases in defense spending.

"We've heard about the new federalism," Portland City Manager Tim Haney commented, "but all of us fear that it is a smokescreen for the federal government to retreat and to do less on urban issues."



# Borders

Continued on from page 6

flow of workers, especially from Mexico.

The immigration "problem" depends, finally, on how you feel about a massive influx of workers that now rivals the peak period of European immigration from 1901 to 1914, when the arrival of 13 million people transformed the nation.

Craig Frederickson is an anthropologist, community organizer and director of Community Research Associates in San Diego. CRA has written two studies for the county on the impact of undocumented workers.

Frederickson doesn't believe a quick solution can be found that will slow the tide of Mexican workers into the U.S. "The Army, Navy and Air Force would not be enough to patrol that border," he says. "You've got to reduce the push and pull factors behind immigration, and that could take years."

Herman Baca, head of the Committee for Chicano Rights in National City, just south of San Diego, sees "the problem" a little differently. An organizer in the Chicano community since 1968, Baca is at the center of nationalist Mexican reaction against the Reagan immigration policies.

"We have suffered this 'problem' since 1848," he says, "since the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ceded this land to the United States. We were always here. The 'problem' for Ronald Reagan is really 20 million Chicanos and Latinos in the U.S.—our population growth and our potential political impact."

Baca believes an educational campaign is the most useful form of protest against the guest-worker and the I.D. card proposals, which he characterizes as "American apartheid." His group is now part of two coalitions in Southern California—one comprised of 62 organizations led by MALDEF that seeks to fight for Chicano civil rights, and the other a coalition of U.S. and Mexican labor unions at

tempting to organize workers on both sides of the border.

The first coalition joining traditional Chicano groups with the AFL-CIO and liberal Democrats who believe the key to controlling the exploitation of undocumented and legal workers alike is strict enforcement of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

"That's where the struggle has got to start," says Pandya of the National Center for Immigrant Rights. "You've got to provide workers with enough protection to complain about unfair working conditions, regardless of their legal status."

Attorneys Peter Schey and Tim Barker host weekly meetings of the coalition at the San Diego offices of NCIR. "We favor full legal status for undocumented workers now in the U.S., and an increase in the visas available to Mexico for legal immigration," Barker says. "The point is to raise up everyone to legal status, which would stop much of the existing exploitation."

The second coalition is smaller, and much more ambitious. It includes the handful of U.S. trade unions that actively organize undocumented workers—in some cases without the approval of their own international officers. For instance Pete Beltran, president of UAW Local 645, is a leader in the Southern California coalition despite public statements by the UAW regional director that illegal workers are too much trouble to organize.

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the United Garment Workers are all important members of the coalition, attempting to organize the Los Angeles garment district where 90 percent of the workers are undocumented Mexican women. "We've signed up about 7,000 workers," says ILGWU organizer Miguel Machuca. "But the conditions are still lousy—maybe 50,000 people working for less than minimum wage."

Although locals of the communications workers, ironworkers, machinists and carpenters also have organizing

pacts with the coalition, most of the active members are outside the AFL-CIO structure. They include the United Electrical Workers, the ILWU, and probably most important, the International Brotherhood of General Workers, organized by José Jacquez "Pepe" Medina in Los Angeles.

Medina fled to the U.S. in 1968 seeking asylum following suppression of the Mexican student movement. Since then he has been a leader in creating bonds between Mexican and American unions through the International Coordinating Committee for the Full Rights of Undocumented Workers (ICC). The "Bill of Rights for the Undocumented," a mimeographed handbill found throughout the Southwest, is the committee's most effective educational tool. Though the IBGW has only 600 to 700 members in Los Angeles, it has been the driving force behind creation of "information centers" at the border for workers coming north, a bail fund for arrested union organizers and international support work at the United Nations.

"We are trying to break the borders, to internationalize worker organizing," says Felipe Aguirre of IBGW Local 301 in Los Angeles. "No one asks for papers when a corporation goes abroad. So we are approaching it the same way. This is a problem of labor, not a problem of immigration."

Labor organizing on both sides of the border is not limited to the urban unions in the Southwest. The United Farm Workers Union includes hundreds of undocumented workers, although it officially endorses AFL-CIO policy favoring employer sanctions and a worker I.D. card.

The Texas Farm Workers Union (TFU) and the Arizona Farm Workers Union (AFW) have also funded organizing drives in Chihuahua and Sonora on the Pacific Coast. The two unions claim membership of 50,000 and 15,000 respectively, but the TFU has no contracts with growers.

"You must remember these are right-to-work states," Aguirre adds. "The AFW has been very successful, with 16 grower contracts. They even require em-

ployers to set aside 10 cents an hour per worker for a fund to develop the communal farms in Mexico."

But cross-border organizing can be dangerous. "The Mexican government has free-trade zones set up in Mexicali and along the border," Beltran says. "Agreements have been made with some Mexican unions not to organize workers for 10 years. We've had some of our people taken out to the beach in a burlap sack by the *federales*."

The ICC is even discussing setting up a new international union in the borderlands of both countries. "It's probably too big a thing to take on right now," Beltran says, "but that's the direction we're headed."

While the Reagan administration and the AFL-CIO worry about I.D. cards, bigger fences and more patrols, local unionists in the Southwest have their own vision of the "borderlands." Rather than project an "open border" for labor and resources to flow only northward, labor organizers in the Southwest see a bi-lingual, bi-cultural transition zone where Mexican and Anglo workers will both have rights and protections.

"The concept of an open border is tricky," says Herman Baca of the Committee for Chicano Rights. "Disco politicians' use it to rationalize slavery. What we're talking about is justice, respect, and equality. If you don't change the power relations, the 'open border' concept is ludicrous."

Wojciech Makowski, himself a Polish immigrant, has worked as an immigration attorney for the past decade in the California Central Valley towns of Watsonville, Visalia and Hanford. Bi-lingual in Spanish, he spends each day trying to prevent deportations, securing unpaid wages and finding adequate health care for Mexican immigrant workers.

"There is no need for American working people to feel threatened by Mexican immigration," he says. "These workers can only undermine wages to the extent that they remain powerless. Once people insist on their rights, they can no longer be exploited."

We can. Because making donations is not as simple as it seems. There's a tangle of tax laws on charitable contributions. If you think you understand what they mean for you in tax savings, think again. Reagan has just changed the rules.

How about planning your estate? Do you know what happens if you don't have a will?

Have you ever tried to give a group a donation and were told that your gift is NOT deductible?

The Gift-Giving Guide is a new book that untangles the technicalities of giving. Expert advice that lets you advise your lawyer or accountant on how you want to handle your charitable giving.

In simple, direct language the Guide tells you how to:

- donate appreciated stock—and multiply your tax savings;
- give anonymously; • con-

- vert loans to contributions; • date a year-end gift of stock; • plan your will;
- use a charitable deduction so as to give less to the Pentagon and more to social programs.

The Gift-Giving Guide. Anyone who itemizes donations on a tax return will find it invaluable.

Order your copy today.

**Can you imagine needing a guide to help you give your money away?**

The Gift-Giving Guide  
\$6.50

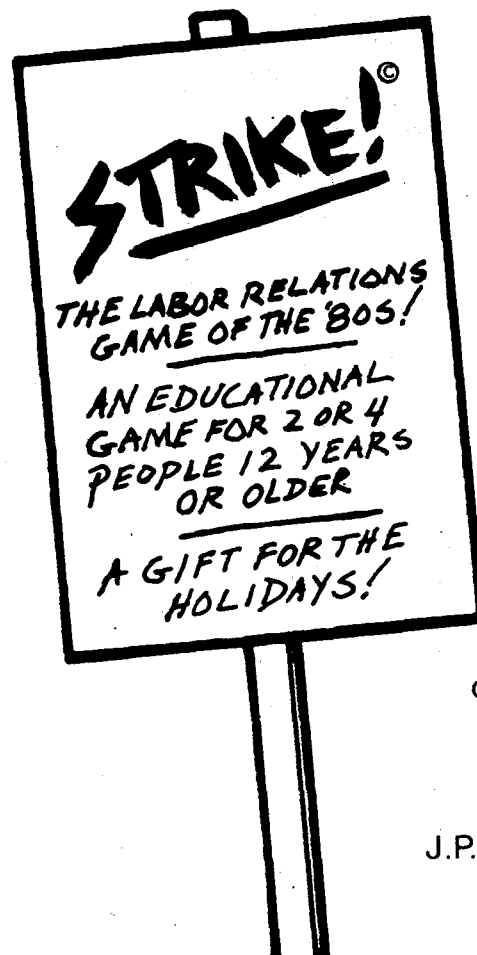
Order from:

The Funding Exchange  
80 Fifth Avenue, Room 1204-J  
New York, New York 10011

Add \$1.00 for handling and postage. New York residents add sales tax.

The Funding Exchange is a tax exempt organization that funds, both directly and through its member Funds, progressive grassroots projects.

Funding Exchange members are:  
Bread and Roses  
Community Fund (Philadelphia), Common  
Capital Fund (Washington, D.C.), Haymarket People's Fund (Boston), Liberty Hill Foundation (Los Angeles), McKenzie River Gathering (Portland, Seattle and Eugene), North Star Fund (New York City), Vanguard Public Foundation (San Francisco).



**WANT TO ORGANIZE A LABOR UNION?**

**BARGAIN FOR HIGHER BENEFITS?**

**STRIKE! FOR WORKERS RIGHTS?**

**NOW YOU CAN!**

**IT'S ALL HERE—AND MORE IN STRIKE!**

**THE LABOR RELATIONS GAME OF THE '80s!**

**STRIKE!** allows you to participate in the high tension action of collective bargaining in your own living room.

Be the first among your friends to win a big contract from J.P. Stevens, challenge big business and fight the union busters.

ORDER **STRIKE!** FOR THE HOLIDAYS, FOR YOU OR AS A GIFT.

I WANT **STRIKE!** IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me:

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:

**STRIKE!, INC.**

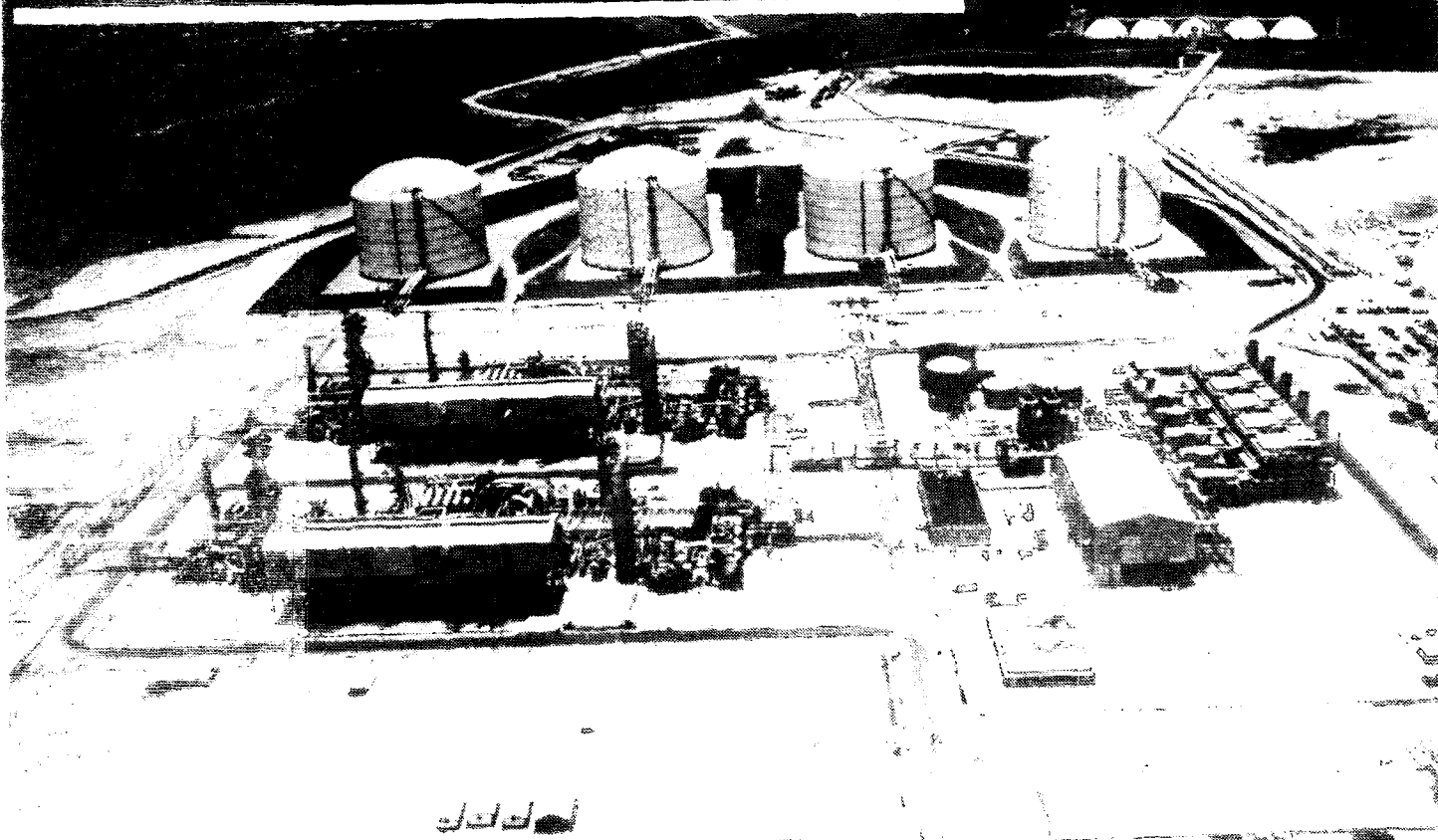
- (1) **STRIKE!** game \$16.95 + \$2.60 postage/handling
- (2-4) **STRIKE!** games \$15.75 ea. + \$7.60 postage/handling
- (1) case-12 games \$173.40 + \$7.00 postage/handling

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **STRIKE!** P.O. Box 14262, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, D.C. 20044



# IN THE WORLD



Most of the money loans in developing countries go to expensive industrial projects, providing business for huge multinational contractors and consultants.

## FINANCE

# World Bank lends itself to criticism

By Vincent P. Wilber

WASHINGTON

ONE MIGHT THINK THAT AN international lending institution with 135 participating governments and more than \$40 billion in capital would consider itself in deep trouble if the government and public-opinion leadership of its largest stockholder began attacking from both sides of the political spectrum.

This is not the case for the 36-year-old International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—popularly known as the World Bank—headquartered in Washington, D.C., where some of its more virulent oppositions originates. The most widely publicized demands to end U.S. membership in the Bank originate on the far right, though some of these may be judged little more than pro-forma exercises in isolationism and chauvinism. Criticism from the left in the United States tends to concentrate on the organization's operating policies.

But the Bank appears impervious to these attacks as its well-paid and generally expert internationally recruited staff (it runs its own private country club to avoid racial prejudices elsewhere) prepares, under the leadership of new president A.W. ("Tom") Clausen, to double its authorized capital to \$80 billion. The United States is being asked to provide the largest share, \$3.2 billion, and in the end, most of the American money probably will be forthcoming, along with an extra \$5 billion or so for a special "soft loan window" patterned by poor countries.

The Bank has reason for confidence: In a time of global recession the foreign projects it finances are much coveted by business and financial communities in the U.S. and Western Europe. The Bank is well known for the emphasis it places on the "credit worthiness" of its client governments, and it has specialized traditionally in financing such large and expensive projects as hydro-electric dams, power plants, ports, roads and plantation-type agribusiness ventures—all of interest to the huge corporate contractors and consultant firms that make their bids directly to the governments of the less-developed countries receiving the loans.

The Bank operates three credit facilities:

1. The original "hard loan window," which was established in 1945 at the Bretton Woods conference. By 1980 it had committed \$59.3 billion for 1,875 projects around the world. Interest rates are determined by the rate it pays for capital in private financial markets, which are attracted to its securities by the ultimate protection that the paid-in or callable capital of the member countries' national treasuries provides. Because of this cushion, the Bank's bonds are rated AAA on the markets. The repayment period for most loans is 20 years and it has never suffered a loan default.

2. The "soft loan window," officially called the International Development Association (IDA), was set up in 1960 to make loans to poorer countries with per capita GNPs of \$625 or less. IDA is at present the world's largest multilateral source of credit for international development, and through 1980 had loaned \$16.7 billion to 74 countries. IDA loans are interest-free except for a 0.75 percent annual service charge and are to be repaid over 40 to 50 years.

3. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) was established in 1956. It has invested more than \$3 billion in some 500 projects designed to promote private investment in less-developed countries through project co-financing with private financial institutions.

### What the right says.

Since the Reagan administration took office, its public posture on U.S. funding for the Bank as a whole and IDA in particular has shifted dramatically. Office of Management and Budget Director David Stockman, in a memorandum leaked to the press last March, wrote: "IDA has supported state-planning efforts in some countries, and in recent years has placed a major emphasis on programs fostering income redistribution. IDA has not been vigorous in using the leverage inherent in its large lending program to press recipients to redirect their economies toward a market orientation." He urged that, as punishment for this wickedness, the U.S. commitment to IDA be cut in half.

But these views were later publicly repudiated by the Reagan White House,

partly as the result of support for the Bank from an unexpected source: Secretary of State Alexander Haig. The secretary declared that U.S. foreign policy would be hamstrung by the proposed cuts and foreign confidence in America's promises to stand by its agreements undermined. The administration finally came down in favor of paying its full dues to the Bank, but with a funding stretchout over several years.

This arrangement has not mollified especially vocal right-wing opponents of the Bank on Capitol Hill such as Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) and Senator Jesse Helms (R-S.C.) or softened their frequent admonitions that U.S. foreign aid given through it or other multilateral institutions opens the door to "socialist" influence abroad and encourages "central planning" by creditor governments.

But the Bank's ideological enemies in both Congress and the administration have been restrained not only by their appreciation of the Bank's economic clout within the American business and financial communities, but also by their grudging recognition that with 21 percent of the Bank's stock—and consequently 21 percent of the weighted votes in its 20-member Board of Governors—the United States does possess an effective veto power, despite frequent congressional fulminations to the contrary. There is, moreover, little doubt that the appointment of Clausen, former chief executive of the giant Bank of America, to succeed Robert S. McNamara as president of the Bank last July did much to stimulate corporate confidence in the far-flung institution. Rightly or wrongly, McNamara was viewed by many conservatives in government and the private sector as an idealist with a greater emotional commitment to ending world poverty and hunger than to profitable trade and financial dealings.

Since taking office, Clausen has been an outspoken and open advocate of closer cooperation between the Bank and multinational corporations and private financial institutions. He is reported to favor an increase in private co-financing of loans and utilization of the Bank as an insurance agency to guarantee credits extended by private capital. Conversely, the new financier president also has been quoted in the press backing expansion of IDA's "soft loan" lending capacity.

Over the years the World Bank has in most cases faithfully reflected the United States' political and commercial goals in foreign policy. Washington used its voting power, for example, to block the limited nationalization or socialization of political-economic institutions in Chile and Jamaica. It is now believed to be applying pressure to prevent multilateral bank loans to Sandinista Nicaragua.

This perceived policy linkage is an important source of dissatisfaction on the

left, which condemns the longstanding preference of both the U.S. government and the Bank for elite-governed market economies and right-wing dictatorships as clients. South Korea, the Philippines and Indonesia are among the Bank's top 10 loan recipients, while Uruguay, Chile, the Philippines and Argentina received seven-fold increases in Bank lending during the '70s.

Nor has this list of favorites been influenced by the so-called human rights amendment to U.S. foreign aid legislation pushed through Congress under the leadership of Rep. Thomas R. Harkin (D-Iowa). Designed to withhold foreign assistance (including World Bank credit) from governments consistently and flagrantly violating the human rights of their citizens, the amendment has not stopped a single loan to such regimes.

Whether World Bank loans have contributed substantially to employment opportunities, agricultural self-sufficiency of health and education levels of the impoverished majorities in its client countries is dubious. There is, in fact, much evidence that the Bank has operated over the years as one of the Western world's most dedicated practitioners of supply-side, trickle-down economics.

According to the Bank's own 1980 Annual Report, about 50 percent of its loans that year were in the category of "agriculture and rural development," while 60 percent went for power, transportation, industry, development finance, telecommunications and "non-project financing" (that is, direct budget support to governments). Moreover, the contention of IDA, in particular, that it pays special attention to meeting "basic human needs" does not seem to be supported by the facts. Of the "agriculture and rural development" loans granted, the majority have been for expensive projects in irrigation, flood control, drainage and livestock breeding. Such loans do not usually go to tenants, sharecroppers or subsistence growers but to landlords with marketable surpluses. The few attempts made to foster small-scale aids to the landless, or encourage the creation of cooperatives, have not worked out very well. A tube well drilling project in Bangladesh, for example, ended up with prosperous landowners pre-empting most of the water and buying up lands serviced by the wells.

It is, of course, the landless, the jobless and the hungry who ultimately must be helped if social conflict is to be avoided and economic self-reliance encouraged in the third world. It seems unlikely that the Bank, as presently constituted, can do the job, if only because it is designed to deal with governments rather than with needy

## The Bank is one of the world's most dedicated agents of supply-side economics.

people. Recognizing this incapacity, some third world leaders have shown growing interest in creating alternative institutions, including a "World Development Fund," in which the needs of the impoverished "South" would have more clout and better voting representation.

According to some of its staffers, this would not greatly disturb the Bank, increasingly involved, as it is, in the indirect provision of international capital largely for the benefit of the multinational corporate community and private financial institutions. Some of these find themselves badly overexposed in the third world, which now staggers along under an outstanding private debt of almost \$500 billion, much of it hard to collect. At the least, a move by the developing nations to form their own lending institution would permit the World Bank to display more truly representative colors as the self-help instrument of the prosperous, capitalist "North" that to a large extent it always has been.

Vincent Wilber is a former foreign service officer, journalist and legislative assistant for foreign affairs in the U.S. Senate.



# Peace

Continued from page 3

peace movement's impact. Retired General Gert Bastian said it reminded him of the sort of bluff that works in Western movies when tried by a hero like James Stewart. The villain is distracted by fear of a nonexistent gun behind him into dropping the one he has.

Nevertheless, Green leader Petra Kelly (visiting the U.S. this week for talks with administration officials) urged the Soviets to accept it and start unilateral disarmament. She stressed that the movement is based not just on refusal of U.S. missiles, but on "rejection of the logic of the balance of terror and of militarism everywhere."

The next day, Kelly escorted 80-year-old Hiroshima survivor and Japanese peace movement leader Ichiro Moritaki to Bonn, where half a dozen politically diverse demonstrations were held around the arrival of Soviet leader Leonid Brezh-

nev. The Greens sponsored a lively international panel discussion in which leading Eastern European dissidents disagreed over the prospects of spreading the movement into Eastern Europe.

British European Nuclear Disarmament (END) leader E.P. Thompson, fresh from coordination talks in Rome, said that "the question before us in the coming year is to move behind the missiles to the Cold War itself. What endangers the peace of Europe, what endangers our civilization, are not only missiles but also the ideological and security structures of both blocs. The answer to this cannot be the victory of one side over the other side, but a victory of the people's movements across Europe, beneath the states, a detente not of states but a people's detente."

Thompson emphasized the need to "find ways of communicating and exchanging information and dialogue with the East and the Soviet Union. We must make the demand to the people of the East and to the states of the East that there shall be freer communication and exchange." He suggested that "there is only one force that can bring together

Europe, can ~~unite~~ European culture, political culture, and that is to bring together the cause of freedom in the East, the cause of democracy in the East and the cause of peace in the West. This is the force of fusion."

Thompson's enthusiasm for this vision was fully shared by Rudolf Bahro, the political thinker who was jailed and then thrown out of East Germany for his Marxist critique of Soviet-bloc communism, *The Alternative*. In the West, Bahro's thinking has evolved rapidly toward anarchist and ecological positions, and he has become a main spokesman for the Greens.

## Nationalism for whom?

On the other hand, exiled Hungarian philosopher Agnes Heller took a more typically pessimistic emigre position of seeing nuclear arms as the only way to keep Europe from falling under absolute Soviet control. She said Thompson's proposal for a European nuclear-free zone "would amount to unilateral disarmament in the face of Soviet power," and called the proposal "Eurocentric," because Soviet missiles, instead of tar-

geting European cities, would target Chinese cities. She cited Mitterrand's conception of nuclear national defense as a good example for Europe.

Bahro retorted that Heller was "East Eurocentric" and that the power politics she was defending was what had got Europe in its present predicament. "Why exactly is Europe now set up as a shooting gallery for both superpowers? And though at present there is no conflict between European countries, why have the two superpowers put off withdrawing? Why?" Because "aggressive European culture" produced two world wars that started from Germany. "And why just now has this peace movement sprung up in such proportions? Because here they go, planning to install new rockets that, in from four to six minutes, could cause as much damage to Russia as Hitler's army in four years. That was a lesson for us we don't mean to forget. We don't mean to forget it even though the Soviet Union is holding hostage European countries with no nuclear missiles. Both factors must be kept in mind. When people start talking about whether the Russians may be coming, well, twice in this century the Germans came, and in Germany this cannot be forgotten."

Agnes Heller said the Germans had no right to nationalism, agreed, but the French did. That was a purely German problem.

Bahro said no, it was a European problem, and an East European problem. So long as Germany was perceived as a potential military threat, this was the pretext for the Russians to stay in Eastern Europe and clamp down on every sign of dissent. But if Germany were demilitarized, both culturally and in fact, what excuse would the Russians have to stay on? This was the great historic opportunity of the peace movement, to change Germans from the "fright-monsters" of the Western world into a people like any other. Disarmament must start in Germany, and particularly in West Germany. Then the changes begun in Poland could continue throughout Eastern Europe.

## East meets West.

The difficulties of developing a comparable movement in Eastern Europe were recognized by one who should know: former Czech Communist Party leader Zdenek Mlynar. In the spring of 1968, Mlynar saw that the democratization underway implied a change in the role of the Party, and was getting ready to propose this at the Party Congress in September. To head this off, Soviet tanks entered Prague in August.

Mlynar, now living in exile in Vienna, said he knew from experience the difficulties of dealing with Soviet leaders. But he said the peace movement should ask Brezhnev to let a representative meet with Andrei Sakharov. A political force like a strong peace movement is able to bring strong pressure to bear, and should use it to open channels of communication to like-minded people in the East. If it worked, this would be "a great step forward for people in the East," he said.

Because Germany is, after all, one nation, it is in East Germany that the contagion of the peace movement has the best chances of catching on. Bahro notes that East Germans watch West German television, and the West German counterculture is spreading. One result has been a sharp increase in the number of East German youths asking to refuse military service as conscientious objectors. The East German Protestant Church has begun to defend pacifist youth, who face prison and ruined career prospects rather than do military service.

Taking advantage of the friendly attitude prevailing in East German officialdom towards the Western peace movement, East Berlin pastor Rainer Eppelmann recently sent an open letter from his young parishioners to Party and government leader Erich Honecker demanding "concrete measures" for peace.

A number of prominent theologians, scientists and writers from both East and West Germany signed a letter written by Robert Havemann—now under house arrest in East Germany for his dissident views—and sent to Brezhnev demanding a denuclearized zone in Europe and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from German soil—East and West.

GIVE  
IN THESE TIMES  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

LAST YEAR  
MY FRIENDS  
COULDN'T  
STOP  
TALKING  
ABOUT THE  
PRESENTS  
I GOT  
THEM



THIS  
CHRISTMAS  
I HOPE  
TO MAKE  
IT UP  
TO  
THEM.

It's easy and it's cheap. It's the gift that keeps on giving all year long. Just fill out the coupon below and we'll do the rest—even send gift cards. Beat the commercial holiday racket—give **IN THESE TIMES** this year!

My name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me after Jan. 1st.

Charge my ☐ VISA ☒ MasterCard

# \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Send first gift to: \_\_\_\_\_

Send second gift to: \_\_\_\_\_

Send third gift to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$19.50 one year ☐ \$10.95 six months

☐ \$18.50 one year

☐ \$9.95 six months

☐ \$18.50 one year

☐ \$9.95 six months

Sign gift cards: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR FAST SERVICE USE OUR TOLL-FREE NUMBER:  
800-247-2160 Iowa residents call: 1-800-362-2860.

HS46



## Women in These Times

This series about women in the '80s—on the job, in personal relationships and in the social and political currents of these times—is made possible by special funding.

# not wives

By Ellen Cantarow

**"L**AST NIGHT," I WROTE IN MY diary in 1965 while I was a secretary in New York, "I dreamed about being in a large, cluttered office. I am clattering away at a huge, heavy typewriter, resenting it, yet insistent at proving how fast I am. What I'm typing comes out in pieces that vanish somewhere to be used for some purpose I don't understand. My new boss sidles up, inspecting my work. 'Hello, Ellen,' he says, bringing his face near mine. 'Hello, Richard,' I say, deliberately using his first name instead of Mr. Klein. 'Or should I call you Dick?' His mouth twists unpleasantly. 'Get on with it,' he commands, pointing at the typewriter."

As for the sexual part of this dream, more presently. But the part about seeing the results of my labor coming out fragmented only to be made invisible was about utter loss of control over work. In the various clerical jobs I'd had by that time, I had a keen gut-level sense of that—a feeling that nothing I did on the job had very much to do with *me*. If the work wasn't absolutely wretched (sorting bills seven and a half hours a day, for instance), its frustrations were: seeing my comments on a manuscript incorporated as my boss' work, for example.

In 1965, when I had the dream, clerical work was quite fixed as the quintessentially "female" job sector—as much a symbol for "women's work" in the pay zone as housework was for unpaid female labor.

By 1975 clerical work had the largest

# Workers,

Women have lifted the veil of domesticity from life in the office to challenge the realities of clerical work: low pay and boring, dead-end jobs.

percentage of women in the workforce, as it does now. Not only is it the largest female ghetto; it is the lowest paid. A 1971 Bureau of Labor Statistics report revealed that the median weekly earnings of full-time clerical workers were lower than those of women in any type of "blue-collar" work. 1979 brought no change: female clerical workers had a median annual salary of \$8,601, while the figure for female "craft and kindred" workers was \$8,902.

This immiseration at the bottom accounts for the familiar figure: women earn 59 cents for every dollar a man makes. While it may be true that in other work sectors women earn somewhat more (waitresses, for instance, earn 74 percent of waiters' pay), the vast clerical depths pull down the average pay of the entire female workforce.

Virginia Woolf, scanning the female job situation in England in 1938, wrote morosely: "The sex distinction seems possessed of a curious leaden quality, liable to keep any name to which it is fastened circling in the lower spheres." This was certainly true in American clerical work even then. But the mystery could at least be partly explained by those machines to which I and every clerical worker had found herself bound.

### Welcome to the new class.

Before the late 19th century clerical work was a male preserve—and a craft. Not every one was to his boss what Boswell had been to Samuel Johnson in the 18th century—co-author, biographer, a sec-

*Continued on the following page*



*Continued from the previous page*  
 on mind as well as a right hand. But the "amanuensis" ran his employer's office. As the industrial revolution heated up, firms expanded, offices grew larger and the older secretarial crafts got splintered into tasks that were parceled out to a large herd of female servants. Office machines (dictaphones, calculators, cash registers, and so on) were to office work what the mechanized loom had been to the skilled weaver in the 18th century. They made the "amanuensis" obsolete by speeding up his work, changing and lowering the skills involved in his tasks and spinning off new jobs. And the new, declassed crowd was brought in to tend the machines—secretaries, stenographers, cashiers, file clerks, phone operators, timekeeping clerks.

Nine years after I had my dream, Harry Braverman, in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, provided a theory for what I and so many millions of other women had earlier felt as a furious, gut-level subjection. Clerical workers, wrote Braverman, constituted "a new class of workers"—disenfranchised, badly-paid and female. At any moment they could become part of a floating mass of labor cut adrift through unemployment, readily available to be bought again cheaply, as employers liked. This "floating" reserve labor supply was getting larger, wrote Braverman, because machines had made farm labor obsolete, and were also displacing workers in older industries. (As for office machinery, it didn't actually displace the workforce as industrial machinery did, but rather degraded the work, making it less skilled). Women were ready candidates for this "mass of human material," wrote Braverman quoting Marx, "always ready for exploitation."

This is to say that many women who do clerical work are workers just as factory workers are. And many office jobs are like factory work—rigidly controlled, with no room for human innovation. Take, for instance, the voluminous steps in banking and insurance that get done by computers tended by women. The visual display terminal (VDT) is the harshest foreman yet devised by management. It sets your speed at, say, 50,000 strokes per

hour, and the message on its screen spurs you if you're not up to par. Creativity? Nil. "What you're supposed to type," said one VDT operator, explaining her machine to journalist Barbara Garson, "are the words, Ginnie Mae, Pool Number, the interest rate and the due date. Well, sometimes I spell out 'Pool Number,' other times I wrote 'pl#.' Interest rate, I might go '9.50 percent' or '9½%'.... I'll tell you what I'm really trying to do. I try to figure it out so all the information will fit on one line but take up as much of the line as possible without going over. If I can get it to fill out the entire line, exactly, then I feel terrific."

The worst job I ever had was a pasture of creative plenty by comparison—a file clerk's job at the *Providence Journal* in Rhode Island. The daily task: filing hundreds of ads (by hand, not machine) under the names of Rhode Island's myriad counties. It was a job with certain innovative possibilities: for instance, retyping the county names all crisp and clean on new file cards or figuring out new ways to classify the information. My boss, a large, pallid, resentful man in his fifties, viewed such pride in craft as an assault on his authority. I got fired for insubordination.

I learned two lessons on that job. First, control: the boss is supposed to have it, the employee isn't. Second, the evanescence of "status." Young women like me who had BAs or even BSs searched like troopers for work "commensurate with our skills." More often than not we declined into the frustrations of the clerical life. Later I learned through Ivar Berg's *Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery* that many firms deliberately hire "overqualified" young college women so they'll quit before becoming eligible for benefits or raises.

#### Anger goes public.

In the '60s we did a lot of bitter private grousing about our conditions. At the publishing house where I worked when I had my "alienation" dream, how bitter, cynical, much of the women's talk was about pay, about the men! How murderous our thoughts when we were passed over for promotions and men with qualifications no different from ours were

brought in. How jaded our knowledge that, for all the first-name basis we had with our bosses, it was all a farce. We were abysmally unequal in pay and status.

A new, female labor revolt began in the 1970s. Partly it came out of the collision between the high expectations of an unprecedentedly literate labor force, and the degrading work awaiting the workers after they graduated from high school or college.

"I had a commercial course when I was in high school," a clerical worker told Jean Tepperman, author of *Not Servants, Not Machines: Office Workers Speak Out*. "My family didn't have the means to send me to college. But in my house...you went to school and worked in an office and considered yourself better than the people in the factories.... But at [the insurance company], it was just like a factory. They had piecework and everything."

And in great part it came out of feminism, which made an explosive contribution to traditional labor movement ideas—the idea that the very hierarchies of the workplace weren't just a product of industrialism. The workplace mirrored family relationships—men on top in every labor category, women on the bottom.

"Right after I started [my new job], my boss was on the phone one day," another clerical worker told Tepperman. "I heard him say, 'Well...I was right here and my girl was here too.' So I let him finish talking and I went in and said, 'When you refer to me, you may refer to me as Mrs. Rogers, Emily, my assistant, my secretary. But don't you ever call me your girl.'"

At the core of the subjection of the new, female class of clerical workers was the sexual subjugation. In my dream my boss had the usual power of the employer over the employee, but he also had the power of the man over the woman—the loathsome power of the brutish father husband or lover.

The dream reflected reality. I can remember no clerical or service job I had (in fact I'm hard-pressed to remember any professional job) in which this sexual element wasn't central. We'd been "honey," "dear," "doll" and "chick" at home, and we were "deared" and "honeied" in the office. In the eyes of our bosses we came to paid work trailing clouds of domesticity from our first and former sphere, the home. This sexual interpretation had been well-entrenched for some time by the time I entered the office, if you want to date the "office housewife" syndrome from one employer's comment in 1916: "I expect from my stenographer the same service as I get from the sun, with this exception: the sun goes on a strike and it is necessary for me to use artificial light, but I pay

my stenographer to work six days out of seven and I expect her all the while to radiate my office with sunshine and sympathetic interest in the things I am trying to do."

In the late '60s virtually all paid work by women was still viewed through this sunshot veil of sexuality. Clerical work only shows up the attitude in its harshest relief. And words hardly prettied up the resulting figures that greeted you as you opened your pay envelope, or the humiliation you felt on the job.

#### Starting to shake the bars.

In the '70s women began bringing legal actions on the strength of such knowledge. New laws like the 1963 Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the 1964 Civil-Rights Act (which forbids discrimination on account of race, religion or sex) bolstered the actions. Women's caucuses formed in the professions. Blue-collar female labor leaders formed the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

But probably the most significant part of women's labor organizing since the '70s, its cutting edge, has been women office workers' organizing in groups like Boston's 9 to 5 and Chicago's Women Employed. It is these groups that have shaken the bars of the largest women's job prison the hardest. They have attacked the many subtle institutional practices that perpetrate discrimination and bar women from promotion even in entry-level jobs: the retitling of jobs that are then given lower pay; the constant passing over women while new male arrivals get promoted; the pervasive practice of having the secretary "break in" a new man at work, only to see him become her superior; the "grading" that ranks men in jobs numbered 8 through 10, while relegating women in those from 1 to 4.

The most interesting recent attack on such depressing abuses has been the "equal pay for comparable worth" battle. The logic behind the slogan is that "equal pay for equal work" can't help the working female majority, who just don't have the same jobs as men to begin with. So the value of female turf must be redefined. The questions this new movement has posed are simple. Why should a nurse be worth less than a fireman? Why should a file clerk be worth less than a janitor?

Such questions are double-edged. On the one hand the have a kernel of momentous potential: redefining the value of scorned work could lead to questioning the competitive bases for valuing human worth that characterizes most of American life. But they could also just advance the "me first" ethic, encouraging the thought that secretarial work is intrinsically "better" than maintenance work. (It would hardly be the first time workers near the bottom had been pitted



Steve Cagan/Dolores Wilber

## Can Reagan turn back the clock?

By Diana Roose

**W**ELL-ENTRENCHED personnel patterns that trap women and minorities in the lowest-paid jobs have begun to change at many firms as the result of a formal "affirmative action plan" for hiring, job posting, training and promotion. Some 350,000 companies are now required to have such a plan under Department of Labor regulations governing employers

who do business with the federal government—among them, nearly every bank with federal deposit insurance, every college conducting government-funded research and every corporation producing memo pads, microcomputers or missiles under federal contract.

But the Reagan administration has moved to halt this progress both by proposing new, less stringent regulations and by acting behind the scenes to ham-





Steve Cagan

against each other.)

Meanwhile it's too early to tell, and the current gains are noteworthy. Last July the Supreme Court ruled that workers could sue for pay discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act even if they weren't doing identical work. The case in question involved a group of Oregon jail matrons who were paid \$200 a month less than deputy sheriffs. The jail matrons had more clerical duties and fewer prisoners to guard, but an outside evaluator found their duties overlapped those of the sheriffs by 95 percent.

On the heels of that decision came a victory for "comparable worth" in San Jose, California. Local 101 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) had walked out of city jobs in which there were sizeable pay gaps between men's and women's work. By demanding a 15.5 percent cost-of-living increase over the next two years, AFSCME overcame the usual male fears that if women made gains, these would come out of the men's pay. There also seems to have been a new awareness among some of the younger men. "I don't see how men can afford not to support women in these things," said Bob Gallagher, an engin-

per ongoing investigations of job discrimination and shield many firms from government scrutiny.

The banking industry and other trade associations have lobbied hard for this rollback of affirmative action, but much of the rhetorical ammunition has been provided by an unlikely group of black neoconservatives who are the current darlings of the New Right. The Reagan transition team for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), for example, was chaired by J.A. Parker, founder of the Lincoln Institute, which claims to represent "black middle Americans." Parker, who has branded affirmative action "a new form of racism," said his goal was to "wipe these laws off the books."

That theme was taken up in Congress by Sen. Orrin Hatch, who has introduced a constitutional amendment to outlaw any goals or quotas based on race. And

engineering technician for the city. "Things are different now from our parents' day. You need two paychecks to raise a family."

Which gets to the heart of a major change in women's workplace status. Some women have always had to work for economic reasons; the "pedestal" in the home was always too narrow to accommodate everyone. But in 1981 nearly 50 percent of all women work, including 60 percent of mothers with school-aged children. This change is prompted both by choice and need. Families are changing (in 1970 one in every three marriages ended in divorce). Women can't count for security on the old arrangements. When women are married, their salaries are both hedges against their husbands' potential unemployment (unemployment rates now stand at 8 percent and more, the highest in six years) and against soaring inflation rates. The current economic crisis shows no signs of ending in the foreseeable future; thus these trends will persist. And women's new claims, our clamorous assertions of worth, our demands for money and new respect, aren't about to vanish. ■

*Ellen Cantarow is author of Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change.*

though no one gives such an amendment much chance of success, the vehement right-wing assault on affirmative action has paved the way for a more "moderate" corporate campaign against affirmative action. Business' attempts to remove the sting of affirmative action through "deregulation" seem mild by comparison, but they are no less dangerous.

Last spring, the administration Task Force on Regulatory Relief invited businesses to submit proposals for eliminating or streamlining federal regulations. The American Bankers Association (ABA) was quick to respond, requesting, among other favors, that the federal government eliminate back pay awards, reduce the scope of affirmative action regulations and stop targeting banks for special investigations of job discrimination—some of the very changes that are now underway. More specifically, the ABA requested that the administration delay a decision on Harris Trust Bank, which has been found liable for up to \$12 million in back pay to its women and minority employees as a result of past discrimination.

## One, two many Nine-to-Fives

By John Judis

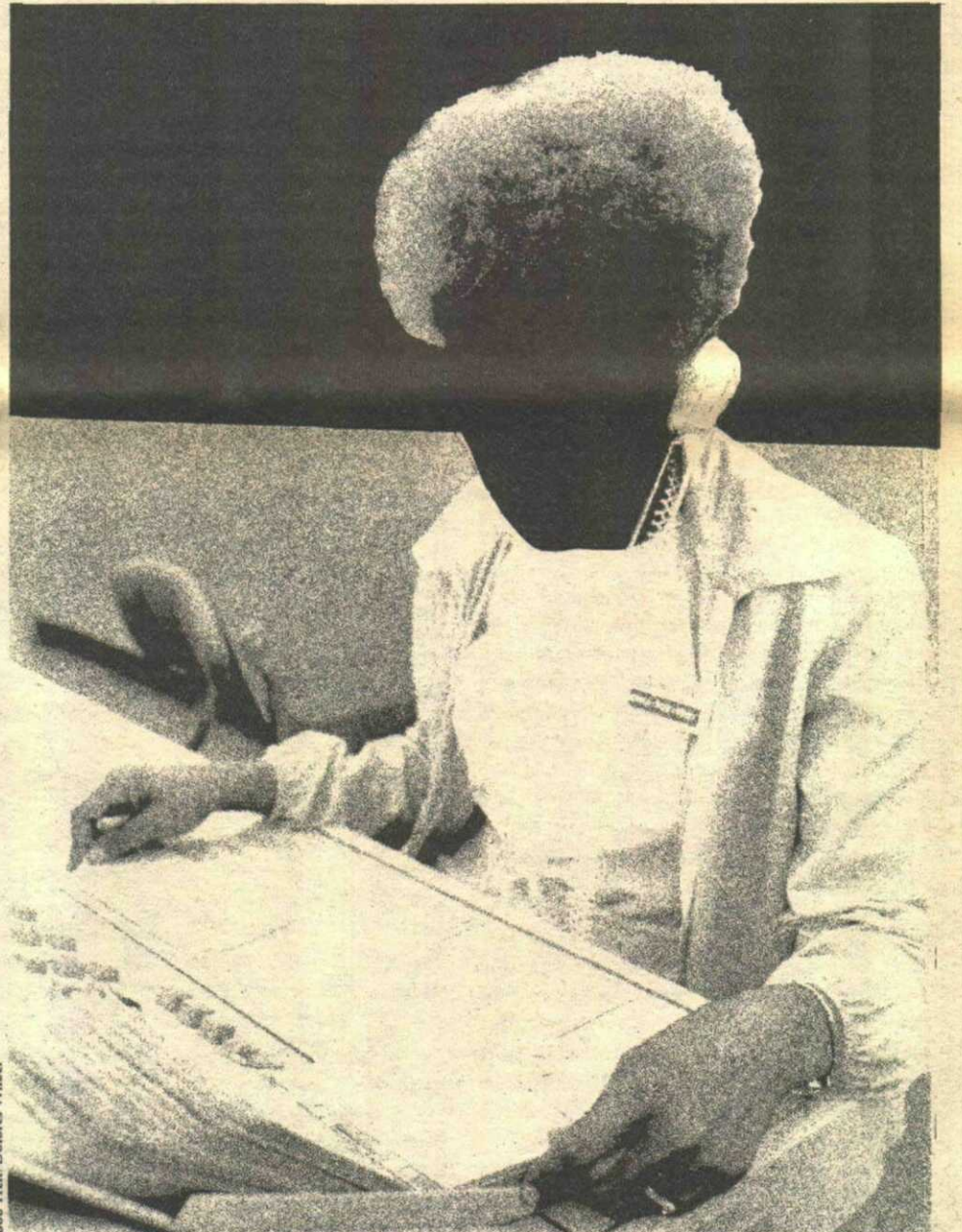
**L**AST MARCH JOHN SWEENEY, the president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and Karen Nussbaum, the executive director of Working Women, held a press conference in Washington to announce the formation of District 925, a nationwide SEIU local that would organize clerical workers. Nussbaum was to become the president of the new autonomous district.

In 1970 Nussbaum, a 19-year-old dropout from the University of Chicago, moved to Cambridge, where she took a clerical job at the Harvard School of Education. Influenced by her experience in the women's and anti-war movements, Nussbaum organized a Harvard Office Workers Group. In 1973 Nussbaum was one of the founders of Nine-to-Five, a Boston-area organization of clerical workers. In 1975 she helped form Local

925, a clerical workers local in Massachusetts that affiliated with SEIU. In 1977 she helped to form Working Women, a national organization of local clerical organizations that now boasts about 12,000 members and 13 affiliated organizations.

Working Women's locals have demonstrated against a variety of discriminatory business practices. A campaign against a low-paying insurance company by San Francisco's Women Organized for Employment, for example, recently won a salary raise for clericals. Every year, local affiliates call a "Bosses Day" on which they present an award to a local corporation or individual for disservice to clerical employees. In 1980, for instance, Cleveland Working Women cited the *Cleveland Press* for making only its women employees do coffee runs, while Bos-

*Continued on page 22*



Bob Fret/Dolores Wilber

Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan complied, postponing a final decision indefinitely.

The bankers have complained that affirmative action rules create unfair harassment and unnecessary paperwork, and that the costs of equal employment programs are too high. Those costs—but not the benefits—have been highly inflated by the business community. In its massive study, *The Cost of Government Regulation*, the Business Roundtable examined the cost of equal employment regulations for a sampling of its member companies. In the statistical appendices, its data show that, for banks, the cost of writing and implementing an affirmative action plan

averaged only 0.01 percent of gross revenues, or less than 15 minutes' worth of earnings in an average working year.

Meanwhile at the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), one of the key agencies enforcing affirmative action regulations, Reagan appointee Ellen Shong (a former corporate lawyer) has ordered her deputies to halt enforcement of all cases involving back pay. The OFCCP has frequently employed back-pay awards to victims of discrimination as a more flexible and effective sanction than revoking federal contracts from employers. Banks such as National City Bank in

*Continued on page 22*



## EDITORIAL

*Road to cutbacks is lined with people*

On Nov. 30, the United States and the Soviet Union began negotiations aimed at reducing the number of theater nuclear weapons in Europe. Before the Geneva negotiations opened Ronald Reagan made an unprecedented bid to make Europeans forget his statements about limited nuclear warfare and to convince them of his interest in peace. Reagan's Nov. 18 proposal of a "zero-option," followed by a Soviet counterproposal for disarmament gave the appearance of momentum towards an agreement that would enhance European solidarity.

If Reagan's speech truly marks a departure from his administration's past bellicosity and lifts the level of discourse above his past attempts to depict the Soviets as the primary source of the world's troubles, it is a welcome development. The president's earlier portrayals of Soviet leaders as iniquitous atheists who "reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime" in order to "further their cause" and Secretary of State Haig's unfounded allegations that the Soviets are the sponsors of "international terrorism" are not the stuff of which peaceful superpower relations are made. The President's recent enthusiasm for nuclear arms negotiations coupled with the proposals by the Soviets and Haig for a relationship "based on restraint and reciprocity" offer better prospects for world peace.

The Reagan administration's new position may be a consequence of knocking its head against political reality enough to have driven some sense into it. If so, we all owe thanks to Europe's burgeoning peace movement, which for the past several months has staged record demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands from all walks of life and has compelled the leaders of our European NATO allies to pressure Reagan to address the Soviets as a dove. His "zero-option" speech was specially crafted to bring his television salesmanship into European living rooms during prime time.

But Leonid Brezhnev's rejection of the "zero-option" in an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel* on Nov. 2—two weeks before Reagan proposed it—raises doubts as to the president's intentions. State Department officials readily conceded that they expected the Soviets to reject the offer. That and Alexander Haig's reported view of the "zero-option" as unrealistic, as well as the State Department's quick announcement that the U.S. has other positions to fall back on support the suspicion that Reagan's speech was simply a propaganda ploy. Yet this does not necessarily mean that the Reagan administration opposes nuclear arms reductions. Reagan has frequently mentioned mutual reduction of nuclear weapons since his 1980 campaign. The real question is whether he has reconciled himself to accept nuclear parity, which could form a basis for negotiations acceptable to the Soviets.

On this score, the "zero-option" proposal offers little hope. While Reagan declared that the Soviets had a six-to-one lead in intermediate-range launchers, the Soviets claim there is now a balance, if short-range U.S. missiles and the nuclear weapons of NATO allies are counted. Even so, the "zero-option" offer asks the Soviets to dismantle the more than 600 intermediate-range missiles already in place, and forgo deploying more, in return for American agreement not to install 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe in 1983.

**Arming for negotiations.**

The Reagan administration's efforts towards nuclear arms control abandons



*A procession of antinuclear marchers in Germany protesting the Reagan administration's policies*

the Carter administration's concern with stabilizing the nuclear arms race. Instead, it stresses the importance of making the American nuclear weapons arsenal a credible threat. This is especially true of old members of the Committee on the Present Danger, such as Eugene Rostow, director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and Paul Nitze, the chief negotiator for the Geneva talks.

Two reasons are given for maintaining the credibility of the American nuclear threat. First is the assumption that the only way to succeed in negotiations with the Soviets is by dealing from a "position of strength." Reagan stated this position in his Thanksgiving Day interview with Barbara Walters. According to Reagan, "Now they [the Soviets] have got an interest and a stake in legitimate negotiations" because "this is the first time that we have sat at the table opposite them in which they have got some interest in coming together in negotiations because we are not busy disarming ourselves." This was the rationale behind the \$180-billion nuclear arms buildup, which, according to Reagan, "will signify our resolve to maintain the strategic balance—and this is the keystone to any genuine arms reduction agreement with the Soviets."

The second reason given in support of a nuclear arms buildup is that it will assist a policy of Soviet containment. Just as Reagan dreams of returning the economy to the days of Calvin Coolidge, he also

the U.S. would probably shift its efforts from deploying Pershing II missiles and land-based cruise missiles to deploying submarine-launched cruise missiles. This would reduce international security in the long-run, because submarine-launched cruise missiles are almost impossible to verify. (Already, on Oct. 2, Reagan pledged to deploy "several hundred"



Alain Keler/Sygma

*Today, everyone is vulnerable. Nuclear intimidation of the Soviets is as threatening to Americans as it is to Russians.*

hopes to return the nuclear arms relationship to the early '60s, when the U.S. used its nuclear superiority to intimidate the Soviets. The last time the U.S. dropped a nuclear bomb was on Nagasaki, but as Daniel Ellsberg points out in *Protest and Survival*, nuclear weapons were used many times after that "in the precise way that a gun is used when you point it at someone's head in a direct confrontation, whether or not the trigger is pulled."

Reagan apparently would like once again to be in a position to make such threats. But the facts of life are such that even with a tremendous increase in the nation's nuclear arsenal the U.S. will not be able to regain its past superiority. Soviet success in attaining parity, in order to prevent further nuclear intimidation, will not be easily surrendered. The effort on their part has been too long and costly to be thrown away. But more important, the level of nuclear weapons development—the number of bombs and the proliferation of delivery systems—makes everyone vulnerable. Nuclear intimidation of the Soviets today is as threatening to Americans as it is to Russians.

**The dangerous spillover.**

Until now, the United States has always tried to limit the scope of strategic weapons negotiations and exclude theater weapons. The limited scope of previous nuclear weapons treaties has always had what William Kincaide of the Arms Control Association has described as "negative spillover effects." Both sides have merely redirected their resources from increasing weapons limited under the treaties to developing new weapons systems. For instance, if a "zero-option" agreement was reached with the Soviets,

submarine-launched cruise missiles.)

Only with the talks on theater and strategic weapons occurring simultaneously would it become feasible to bring all nuclear weapons systems into consideration. This opens the possibility of putting a ceiling on inventories of all nuclear weapons and placing a ban on the development of new weapons systems. If overall nuclear arsenals were frozen, the chances of negotiations leading to reductions of nuclear weapons would be greater. Eliminating weapons would increase the world's security.

As things stand now, the Reagan administration is unlikely to adopt a negotiating position leading to such a goal. Reagan is holding fast to the administration's hope of regaining nuclear superiority and is insisting that the theater-force negotiations be narrowly confined.

Yet the emergence of public sentiment for disarmament, both in Europe and in the U.S., could compel the administration to move toward a nuclear freeze, and possibly even to cutbacks. The anti-MX movement in Utah and Nevada has shown that popular pressure can be decisive. And a national movement to end the arms race is taking shape. On Veterans Day tens of thousands of people gathered at more than 150 campuses to participate in teach-ins on the threat of nuclear war. On Nov. 17, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops urged Catholics to advocate a halt to the arms race. And this week a petition drive for a statewide initiative calling for a bilateral nuclear arms freeze has been launched in California. If the Reagan administration begins to move toward a real reduction in nuclear arms it will be a result of the growth of this movement.



# LETTERS

*IN THESE TIMES* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## NOT SO SIMPLE

PER THE BOOK REVIEW (ITT, SEPT. 30) of *Workers Rights: East and West*: it may indeed be true that "no democratic government in any industrial country of the West wishes to destroy or dominate the unions," as the book claims, but, speaking from 10 years experience as a union steward, these governments have no hassles about actively trying to keep their union movements small and pretty powerless. Just think about various forms of anti-union legislation, such as right-to-work laws that crop up in the Western democracies (especially North America) all too frequently, not to mention the nearly daily depiction of unions (except for Solidarity) as being too big, too powerful, corrupt, crime-ridden, good only for strikes and inflation and bad industrial relations. If the union movement is not growing in Canada and is in actual decline in the U.S., we can thank this incessant anti-union propaganda to a great extent.

Also, it appears the reviewer did not even look at the state of unions in Western-backed dictatorships where institutions such as the AFL-D or the Asian-American Free Labour Institute have done so much to destroy free trade unionism. I believe Amnesty International noted that to be a trade unionist in Guatemala meant taking your life in your hands. And as AI's quarterly *Labour News* as well as its *Monthly Bulletin* attests, murder, torture, unjust imprisonment, "disappearance" and forced exile are the routine experiences of organized labor in Western-backed tyrannies.

ITT should pay some attention to the oppressed trade unions of "Free World" dictatorships.

—K. Taylor  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

## SOME THINGS ARE A MUST

ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR \$37 FOR my subscription and my grandson's. I am so pleased with your paper, I wish I could send a dozen gift subscriptions but I can't. I'm 88 years old with a minimum income and I do manage to make contributions to causes I must support, such as for peace and against nuclear reactors—and weapons and for candidates who vote right as I see it.

—Nola Sloan  
Troy, Mont.

## WORK IS GOOD

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE IDEA THAT the poor shouldn't be forced to work is one of the more irritating axioms of the left and I think a real key to its lack of popular support. Scheier's article on workfare (ITT, Oct. 7), while not entirely biased, favored the usual left rhetoric and arguments as to why Workfare is not fair. But these will never convince the working poor, nor most persons of ordinary logic.

Why is the left so scornful of the simple idea of putting welfare recipients to work? The concept that as long as people are unemployed, receiving state funds and otherwise idle they might as well go out and clean up a few parks is so obvious that one almost thinks it must be the left ideologists' delight in abstract argument that leads them to say no.

Leftists seem to find work appalling,

something that should only be allowed under communist states. That most jobs are deadly and go nowhere is not acceptable to them nor is the fact that most working people expect to work long and hard hours without ever becoming a vice president.

A tragedy has befallen America's new welfare class: many have forgotten how to work. So they are hopelessly mired. Should the workers of the world unite, these people won't be on board. Workfare helps conserve that commodity called "work habits," which the Me generation so assiduously tried to shed, but that are the means of production for most of the world. The ideology of "You're being screwed" helps to ensure permanent outsider status. I do not respect someone who is above sweeping, no matter what his or her chosen calling.

One other point eluded Scheier's article—It's a good thing to have some of those floors mopped. I can think of many areas—child care, street patrol, services for old and sick that would be blessed by Workfare. They're public services, a way to serve the people. When the Chinese sent their millions out to sweep the streets that was considered right thinking in left circles. Why not here in the old U.S.A.

—Esther Wanning  
San Francisco

## WHO DONE IT

HALF AN INTERVIEW ON R.G. DAVIS (ITT, July 29) was followed by a letter by Suzanne and Jim Cowan (Aug. 26) stating: "Contrary to his assertion, Davis did not translate Dario Fo's comedy, *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* Davis paid us a small fee and agreed, both verbally and in writing, to credit us as translators on the playbill." I responded immediately, but my letter was not in proper form, so now this:

In the commercial productions I have done off-Broadway and at the Los Angeles Actors Theatre, in the space reserved for my "bio" usually composed of prior credits, I have printed an accounting of those who contributed to the "North American version" of Dario Fo's play. It says that Suzanne and Jim Cowan gave me a translation that was reviewed and changed by Margaret Kunze in Milan and Rosanna Staffa in New York, that assistant director Bonnie Borenstein and I went over the Italian and English for two months rewriting the text prior to our Vancouver, B.C., production and Joe Siravo contributed some jokes and changes to the New York production as later Joe Spano did to the Los Angeles one. I wrote an introduction, rewrote the end, and numerous other sections. The process of "translation" was elaborate. All of this is carefully noted because I figured way back when, that once in the commercial theatre everyone is suspicious of getting ripped off, even one's friends.

—R.G. Davis  
San Francisco

## EVEN THE BEST

IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH JOHN JUDIS (ITT, Oct. 15), Theodore Weiss says, "I think that care and concern for economic justice ought to be the driving force of the Democratic Party."

This is a worthy sentiment, all ITT readers will agree. Unfortunately, on the same day that ITT arrived at my home, I happened to see a television ad for the re-election of New York's Mayor Edward Koch, and who should come

forward to urge voters to re-elect the mayor but Congressman Weiss? Yet Koch's record has been a complete repudiation of everything Weiss claims to stand for. While the city's public services have dwindled to the vanishing point, Koch has used tax abatements and other devices to funnel money into the coffers of New York's real estate and banking elite, while overtly appealing to racism in an effort to win the support of white voters. He has once again endorsed Westway, a multi-billion dollar real estate and construction boondoggle, while watching the city's subway system fall into chaos, and he has supported a patently racist gerrymandering of the City Council. In fact, in his combination of budget cuts, aid to business, assaults on public employee unions and public contempt for the poor and minorities, Koch has given New York a local dress rehearsal for the Reagan administration.

So why does Weiss endorse him for re-election? I wish Judis had asked that question, but the only reason I can think of is that Weiss is a Democrat and Koch won the primary. The fact that black and Latin voters, and many whites in Weiss' own district, repudiated Koch, apparently makes no difference. Nor did the presence in the race of a pro-labor independent, Frank Barbaro. This whole sorry episode underscores the limitations of even the most liberal elements within the Democratic Party.

—Eric Fonar  
New York

John Judis replies: At the time of the interview (Sept. 17), I asked Weiss about the mayoral race, and he said he was not backing either candidate.

## NOT BY SEX ALONE

CHARLES FAGER'S ARTICLE ON Martin Luther King (ITT, Nov. 4) shows the dangers of whites interpreting and writing black history.

The most important problem with the article is that Fager blames the disputes between King, SNCC and the NAACP on Dr. King's sexual habits and omits any of the profound philosophical and tactical differences among them. Any student of Afro-American history knows that the NAACP rarely supported mass street demonstrations, preferring instead to present its grievances through the courts. SNCC's differences with King likewise stemmed from a philosophical base: SNCC was more radical and more involved in indigenous organizing than SCLC. Clayborne Carson's recent book, *In Struggle—SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's*, adequately explores the ups and downs of the SNCC-SCLC relationship without once mentioning King's personal life.

In the black community the failure of SCLC to recover completely from King's death is viewed as an example of the dangers resultant from personality-oriented leadership, which is invariably too dependent on one individual.

In addition, during the mid-'60s the appeal of non-violence as the sole strategy for change was rapidly losing its grip, well in advance of King's death. Less than six months after the victory at Selma, Watts exploded. For the rest of the '60s violence was the primary political expression of urban blacks. King's continued commitment to non-violence and the perception of younger blacks of him as a man who did not feel or understand the tugs of black nationalism began to render both him and his strategies obsolete. None of this had anything to do with King's sexual activities.

Finally, Fager's speculations as to the response of the black community and King's followers to the revelations concerning King's private life fails to capture or consider black perspectives on ethics and morality. The black community has historically had a great deal of tolerance regarding the extra-marital affairs of ministers, so long as they were circumspect and took care of the basic needs of family. Extra-marital af-

fairs, standing alone, would not necessarily undercut a minister's authority within the community. Indeed, to reject leadership solely or primarily on this basis would generally be deemed petty-minded. If the minister's wife did not feel compelled to divorce him, the general attitude would be "It's none of our business."

—Sharon D. Blackmon-Mauldin  
Selma, Ala.

## HUMAN COURAGE

I WAS DEEPLY TOUCHED BY MIRIAM Wolf's article "Oh, Palestine" (ITT, Nov. 11). Such human courage is rare in this country's media which are fixated on crises and which take their cue from a less than human State Department.

Perhaps with more coverage such as this we may gradually inch our way toward peace.

—Fouad Moughrabi  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

## FAMILY

FOUR LETTERS (ITT, NOV. 11) CONTINUED the debate on the left and the family. One writer, Earl V. Brown Jr., warns that when the right starts rounding up scapegoats, "Scott Tucker then may find himself in the same concentration camp as Michael Lerner." If the camp he conjures resembles the old Nazi camps, then you may be sure that the queers, wearing pink triangles, will be even worse off than the commies. Frankly, I don't think fascism is around the corner, and neither do I believe that Lerner's "pro-family" strategy advances socialism or resists the right.

A socialist "pro-family" strategy is like a socialist "pro-money" strategy. Yes, of course it is ultra-left idiocy to urge people to drop out of families into a social void, just as it makes no sense to be moralistic about money when capitalists control wages. The question remains: Is "the family" a neutral vessel we can fill with any wine we choose? Or is it, in fact, a social form shaped and freighted by the past? Liz Weston, referring to a NAM convention discussion, wrote that "Barbara Ehrenreich pointed out that Lerner has confused living units with families." Quite so.

Robert D. Goodman expresses concern "that we do not, in our conviction, use words in ways that are counterproductive and hurting." A socialist "pro-family" strategy is precisely a use of words to mask a complex reality. Goodman says "many lesbian and gay male couples insist on the word 'family' and probably have the right to that word." Certainly, I defend the right of any animal to call itself a vegetable, and of any vegetable to call itself a mineral.

I hope ITT never becomes a NAM/DSOC bulletin writ large, thus becoming no more "independent" than the Leninist *Guardian*. The U.S. left will suffer if we readers do not keep ITT alive and well. The politics that are most prominent in ITT often dismay me, but at least this paper addresses the crucial issues. Conjuring up concentration camps is an attempt at censorship by intimidation, and bovine unanimity only means that we are easily herded for the kill. Let's hope ITT builds a left composed of Loyal Oppositions.

—Scott Tucker  
Philadelphia

## CORRECTION

The credit for the collage illustrating "How Reagan is speeding the American empire's decline," (ITT, Nov. 4), was incomplete. It was a project originating with Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD) in New York City.

In These Times circulation for the week of Dec. 2, with comparative figures for one year ago:

	Week of Dec. 2	One year ago
Subscriptions	22,591	17,778
Bulk	2,115	1,896
TOTAL	24,706	19,674





## IN DEPTH

# Soviets should say yes despite Reagan

By Diana Johnstone

B O N N

**A**T A MEETING OF THE German peace movement in Bonn, Nov. 21, attended by prominent Eastern European opposition leaders, British anti-nuclear leader Edward P. Thompson, Daniel Ellsberg and others urged Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev to accept President Reagan's "zero option" arms proposal and to build on it to stop the arms race.

At a panel discussion Ellsberg said the peace movement in Europe, and especially in Germany, had forced President Reagan to make a proposal he had said he would not make and does not want accepted.

"Reagan is making a proposal designed to be rejected, he hopes will be rejected, he expects will be rejected," the former Pentagon advisor said. "This does not mean, however, that the proposal is so injurious to the Soviet Union that the Soviet Union should not accept it. On the contrary, the Soviet Union *should* accept it. But will they? No. Why? Because a politician is unwilling to take a step that shows he was bluffing or overstating his needs."

"The Soviet assertion they need the SS-20s to counter the Forward Based Systems may be sincere. It has just as much merit as the Pentagon's assertion that they need the Pershing, which is to say, from an objective point of view, it has no merit whatever."

"The SS-20 allows them to do nothing they cannot do as well or better with SS-18 ICBM warheads. The SS-20 is like the

Thors and Jupiters we had over here when we had no ICBMs. When we developed ICBMs, we dismantled them."

"The Europeans here are acting as if—and the superpowers are doing nothing to disillusion them—as if the only threat were from weapons of intermediate range or less. That's absurd. The superpowers are going along with a kind of hypnotic misdirection focusing them on a problem that is quite irrelevant to strategic confrontation."

"The SS-20 adds literally nothing to the capabilities the Soviets have with their ICBMs. They can cover every target in Europe with their ICBMs. And what's more, the ICBMs are more accurate than the SS-20. The SS-18 is more accurate, it has a larger warhead and there are more of them. The SS-20 is not needed. Whatever motive the Russians have for keeping them, it is the same order of motives that we have for multiplying our missiles, which is to say, nothing that bears on the security of the U.S. or the Soviet Union. The best thing you can say for them is that they are simply imitating the American programs. The worst you can say is that they are imitating American motives, which is to say, giving themselves some pre-emptive and first strike capabilities."

Ellsberg stressed that "U.S. policy, U.S. strategy for the defense of Europe, has always been based on the threat and readiness to initiate nuclear war in response to a Soviet advance into Western Europe, however that came about. To make that threat credible, the United States government has always regarded it as essential that the United States be as

superior as possible, technologically and in numerical terms. The requirement of being superior has meant that no U.S. president has ever in any month or year ever been willing to see a stop to the arms race."

"If the arms race is to be ended," he said, "one of the superpowers at least must be willing to propose an end to the arms race and a reversal of it. The United States government will not make such a proposal, because it wishes to pursue superiority through continued testing and continued building of weapons like the MX."

Ellsberg suggested a two-part proposal:

"First, for a halt to production, testing and deployment of all nuclear vehicles and warheads on both sides, tactical, strategic and intermediate range. No new weapons of any sort could be tested on either side. The Pentagon has agreed that SALT can be monitored adequately by national means, and this would be easier to monitor since it's easier to monitor an agreement that there will be no new missiles than to monitor a complicated agreement that permits some and bans others."

"The second part of the proposal would be a response to Reagan's proposal accepting it and possibly going further. In order to include some existing U.S. weapons as well as eliminating existing Soviet intermediate range missiles and projected American ones, it could go down to the range of medium-range missiles such as the 108 Pershing-1s we have over here."

"If you did not include that second part, Reagan's response to the first proposal of a freeze would be that he could not accept a situation where the Russians retained a monopoly of intermediate range missiles in Europe and he must in effect continue the arms race. If on the other hand the second part were included, it would seem to me that the publics of the NATO countries, with the atten-



Ellsberg says Europeans forced Reagan's "zero-option" proposal.

tion focused on this problem, would make it almost impossible for their governments to go along as allies with an American government that refused such an offer by the Russians."

"A 'zero option' limited to Europe is not even a first step toward the survival of Europe if it is accompanied by a continued buildup of the weapons based outside Europe by both superpowers. Both East and West, Europe's survival and security from nuclear devastation can be found only in a world that is a nuclear-free zone. Only in a zero option for the world as a whole, the ultimate abolition of nuclear weapons."

Subscribe to  
**IN THESE TIMES**



Special Introductory Rates!  
**50% OFF!**

Given the nature of the news media in this country today, I believe that it is imperative that working people get the other side of the story. *In These Times* is an excellent source of information from an anti-capitalist point of view.

**Bernard Sanders, Mayor,  
Burlington, Vermont**

☐ Yes, I want to try IN THESE TIMES and take advantage of your Special Introductory rates. I don't even have to enclose payment now—you'll bill me later.

☐ 6 months at \$10.95 (50% off newsstand rate!)  
☐ 1 year at \$19.50 (55% off newsstand rate!)

**My Guarantee: If at any time I decide to cancel, you will refund my money on all unpaid copies, with no questions asked.**

IN THESE TIMES  
1509 N. Milwaukee  
Chicago, IL 60622

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
For faster service use our toll-free number: 800-247-2160.  
Iowa residents call: 1-800-362-2860.



"Here, Señor, is the statue of Simón Bolívar, who liberated Latin America from foreign domination!"

Get wise to  
the secret power  
of multinationals

If you believe corporate power is both something to be wary of and something to control, then find out what the giant companies are up to, and how consumers and workers worldwide are fighting them.

**MULTINATIONAL  
monitor**

OK, fill me in . . . Please enter my subscription to *Multinational Monitor* for one year (12 issues). I enclose my check/money order for \$15.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Add \$2.50 for Canada and Mexico—\$8 for all other countries. All amounts U.S. \$  
Send to *Multinational Monitor*, PO Box 19405, Washington, DC 20036.



KATE ELLIS

# Can the left defend a fantasized family?

By Kate Ellis

**I**N PERIODS OF POLITICAL RE-action, self-criticism on the part of the targets of that reaction is necessary, but also potentially harmful. It can give us, along with new strategic priorities, a sense of a new beginning. But it can also play into the hands of those who would use our weakness to divide and weaken us further. Recent proposals aimed at correcting the "negative" view of the family attributed to the women's movement and the left partake of both of these qualities.

From within the feminist camp, Betty Friedan has announced that the women's movement must enter a "second stage" where women will work "no longer against men, but with them." With the life of the ERA fading fast, Friedan wants to bring to its side men and women who have up to now denied their support to this amendment. What has kept them away, she believes, is "the sexual politics that distorted the sense of priorities of the women's movement of the '70s [and] made it easy for the so-called Moral Majority to lump ERA with homosexual rights and abortion into one explosive package of licentious, family-threatening sex."

At the 1977 Women's Conference in Houston, a large, broad-based body of delegates voted to make the right to abortion and freedom of sexual preference intrinsic to our notion of women's rights. Those votes set the movement on a course that was trying to learn from its own history: in particular, from a suffrage campaign where social issues were systematically jettisoned, only to render the vote, once gained, meaningless as an instrument of change for women.

These issues certainly helped give the Moral Majority a weapon with which to attack the women's movement, and this attack probably tipped the balance against the ERA. Yet when Friedan goes on to say that the ERA has "nothing to do with sexual behavior," she is in effect asking us to choose between rights for some women ("good girls") and rights for all women. Being a "good girl" means never having to say you're a lesbian or that you need an abortion.

Of course equal rights is not about telling women what they ought to do in bed, or how they should arrange their lives in that space we call home. But it is about decriminalizing behavior associated with sex (such as lesbianism, abortion, prostitution or extramarital sex), however you may feel about them. In standing firmly on these grounds in 1977 we did the only thing a women's movement worth its name could have done.

The success of the right is nevertheless grimly real. Its strategy of separating "good girls" from "bad girls" is working so well, in fact, that some feminists see no alternative but to follow suit. Among these is Michael Lerner, with his proposal to the left and the labor movement that we form a "pro-family" lobby to "celebrate the family" and agitate for a Family Bill of Rights. Lerner believes that if we show Middle America that we care about what it cares about, it will be more likely to listen to our solutions to the sorry state of family life today. And what are these solutions? The abolition of capitalism and of patriarchy.

This, then, is a prescriptive proposal for the ills of the country. "Celebrating" the family means supporting men and women who stay in relationships and kids who don't leave home till it's time to go to college or become self-supporting. Such support avoids the pitfalls of telling people what they ought to want because it assumes that "the family" is what we all



want. We don't have to define it beyond that because we all know what it is. "Even when our actual experience does not correspond to our expectations," Lerner comments, "most people do not reject the ideal of family life, but are upset that the ideal has not been realized." Then we blame ourselves, he says, when it is really capitalism and patriarchy that is coming between us and our desires.

The question is: is there anything we all want from the family, be we married or

ideal is regressive and doomed to frustration. The thesis of Dinnerstein's *Mermaid and the Dinosaur* is that much of the social harm that goes on in the world can be traced back to that frustration. Our unequal sex/gender system, at the center of which is woman as primary nurturer, privileges male frustration and offers up women and nature as its targets. Based on material conditions that no longer exist for our species, these sexual arrangements are becoming more and more a threat even to the survival of the species itself.

Assuming that "the family" is a code word for desires whose gratification ultimately depends on our control of a mother who forsook us in infancy, it would be a patent lie for a feminist left to try to lure people to it by claiming that its program points a way to meet those needs. The critique of the family that emerged in the early states of the second wave of feminism was never to say that families should be "smashed," but rather that they should be liberated from the escalating needs for which they were supposed to be solutions. Now we are seeing a retreat from this critique on the part of feminists, a pulling back that makes an all too tidy fit with the attack upon it that is coming from anti-feminists. Lerner and Betty Friedan and a host of other proponents of women's liberation are now announcing that the family is "the only institution that provides caring and love for its members," the only institution whose reason for being is to provide these things.

his family did not correspond to its patriarchal protagonist's expectations and because he responded to this discrepancy not by rejecting the ideal but by becoming upset that the ideal had not been realized. He refused to see his demands as the source of his pain, and Lerner is urging us to follow in his footsteps. But a species that does not listen to, and learn from, its pain is heading for trouble. The point of the feminist critique of the family was not to tell those who had husbands or wives or children or aunts or grandparents that they were *ipso facto* reactionary. It was to investigate the fissure between the family as an ideal and the family as a lived experience, and to deal with the sense of loss created by that fissure by deconstructing and analyzing the ideal.

The fact that most people behave as Lerner describes in the face of this loss is reason enough, for him, not to question their responses. And of course he is right in cautioning the left to avoid its old habit of telling people what they ought to want. But the ideal of the sufficient family is a defense against this loss, a defense that does not work. Feminists like Dinnerstein are addressing the question of why it does not work and what arrangements for taking care of the helpless would work better. Probably these new social arrangements will be tagged with the word "family." But unless we stop clinging to the old ideal with the force of an infant monkey grasping its mother's fur, the new groupings will simply be new vessels containing the



Family may be defended but only as a metaphor for a paradise lost.

single, straight or gay, male or female, "good" or "bad," right or left? I would answer: only insofar as "the family" is perceived not as any particular (and thus mutable) living arrangement, but as the institution that can cure all our social and personal ills, a metaphor for some private and public paradise lost. To call this "family" a mythological construct is not to deny our deep involvement in it, but rather to understand that involvement in a different way.

In our culture this ideal functions at two levels, the social and the psychological. In critiques of modern life it figures as primitive communism, or as a patriarchal stage of social development, or, from the right, in an idealization of a past period of "law and order." At the psychological level this lost paradise can be expressed in a single reverberant word: mother.

In "the family," these two, the social and psychological descriptions of the world we have lost, converge. Strategies for dealing with that loss differ for men and women, and also among individuals. But feminists are right in suspecting that woman's responsibility for maintaining what Dorothy Dinnerstein calls "private emotional continuity across time," a responsibility that grows out of her role as prime nurturer, binds women to a condition of stasis, and is threatened if women become choosing people actively involved in the world. Freedom for women does not cause the loss of our infant paradise, but under our present nurturing arrangements it may very well complicate that loss.

If the ideal of family is a substitute for a mother who once existed (as far as we knew) only to meet our needs, then the

Yet in reality the family is not only a nexus of our need and aspirations for love, but a social and legal institution that posits a responsibility for care of its helpless members whether love is present or not. Obviously it is better when love and obligation coincide, but the core of the family system is an obligation to care in old age for those who cared for us as children. This is what Cordelia meant when she told her father she loved him according to her bond. Her sisters were more "supportive" of Lear, but she rejected his attempts to control his daughters, took the consequences, and helped him die.

But *Lear* is a tragedy precisely because

same old pain.

Rather than seeing "the family" as a sick institution to be made well (either by Reaganomics or by socialist feminism) why not say that it is becoming better able to deal with conflicting interests (between adults, between generations) that were once suppressed (in the name of "family unity") in the service of male dominance? Crossing the line between "good girls" and "bad girls" women have developed new strengths in encountering new problems. A movement that divides women into these two categories will never serve women's needs since we have little control, despite what the right says, over where that line comes down. ■

## History that's fun to read!

Were you one of those kids who sat through your high school history classes and secretly read comic books? Today you wouldn't have to: you can learn your history and enjoy it too, with *The Incredible Shrinking American Dream* by Estelle Carol, Rhoda Grossman and Bob Simpson. Five years in the making, this thick, large-format comic book brings to light the often-forgotten history of working people, women and minorities. In *These Times* writes: "[The history] is presented in a well-researched narrative and with a good strong dose of Mad magazine humor and graphic style. . . . The book stays light but it doesn't lose its bite." A perfect gift—we especially recommend it for teenagers, union members, and leftists with an empty spot on their coffee tables.

### To order

Ask for this book at your favorite store, or use this coupon to order by mail.

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *The Incredible Shrinking American Dream*. (Prices postpaid: One copy, \$7.50. Two or three copies, \$6.50 each. Four or more, \$5.50 each.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_



Return with payment to:

Alyson Publications, PO Box 2783, Dept. A36, Boston, Mass. 02208.





# INPRINT

## FICTION

# A long, long way from nirvana

*America has  
"come up  
short in the  
Fulfillment  
Sweepstakes."*

**The Nirvana Blues**  
By John Nichols  
Holt, Rinehart & Winston,  
527 pp., \$14.95

By Paul Skenazy

This book concludes what John Nichols calls his "New Mexico Trilogy": *The Milagro Beanfield War*, *The Magic Journey* and *The Nirvana Blues*. Together the novels tell the story of Chamisaville, a small Western town confronting its growing success—a boom town, 20th century version, in which the attraction has changed from gold and silver to natural springs, landscape and good vibes.

In *The Nirvana Blues* Chamisaville has become a retirement village for white 30-year-olds seeking salvation in the Geographical Cure. Everyone is an ex-professional something: doctor, lawyer, professor, shrink, husband or wife. Everyone wants to own the last little independent farm, the possession of the Last Chicano, Eloy Irribarren.

Eloy represents that lost community of shared labor and lives tangled together by years spent in the same place. His shovel blade, "rounded from a million hours of use," suggests "an intimate stake in the land," a stake that has disappeared. Instead, others want his farm for its water rights; as a resort site; for a cult religious retreat; to parcel out and resell; or simply to keep others from having it.

Eloy's candidate is Joe Miniver, a sometime garbage man, hauler, husband and father still nursing pastoral dreams of life as a yeoman farmer. Joe goes after his private kingdom by setting up a coke deal with some friends. Joe wanders in a sleepless haze over miles of roadways on bicycle and in broken down VW buses and in old trucks. He meets Nancy, then Diana, then Irene, with more or less predictable results. Except there's no climax, no orgasms for our lone-star hero.

The dope machinations, family problems, money worries and liaisons string us along through far too many incidents, not quite making us care enough what happens next. The wonder is that one doesn't simply give up on this silliness.

### Living on the edge.

But this is not *The Serial*. John Nichols is smarter, angrier, kinder—and he is a hell of a lot better writer than others who have latched onto such material. His satire stretches from slapstick and screwball comedy to wisdom. He



John Nichols protests the "gurufied pizzafication of the nation."

is endlessly inventive.

*The Nirvana Blues* is a story of American brinkmanship. No one cares about anything anymore, and a somewhere has become just an anywhere. It's a delicate job Nichols is about, and I don't think he's always

successful. Devices like Joe's imagined headlines and his revenge scenarios wear thin with overuse. The size tends to flatten and equalize incidents. The frenzy of the plot made me yearn occasionally for a longer whiff of character, a breath of developed

motive. The very energy of its satiric rage traps it in allegory, in overstatement, in burlesque substituting for humor.

An example among many. Early in the novel, we meet Egon Braithwhite, a more or less harmless dodo who takes a vow

## The magic journeys of John Nichols

John Nichols moved from New York City to Taos in 1969, where he "just sits in a little room and writes novels." So far six have appeared: *The Sterile Cuckoo* (1965), *The Wizard of Loneliness* (1966), *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1974), *The Magic Journey* (1978), *A Ghost in the Music* (1979) and *The Nirvana Blues*. He also wrote the text of *If Mountains Die: A New Mexico Memoir* (1979), with photographs by William Davis. This spring, Holt, Rinehart will publish another non-fiction book on Taos County, *The Last Beautiful Days of Autumn*, for which Nichols did photographs and text.

In addition, Nichols has recently been involved in the script of a Costa-Gavras film, *Missing*, about one of the Americans killed in the 1973 coup in Chile, which will be released in December starring Jack Lemmon and

Sissy Spacek. He is also writing another picture for Costa-Gavras "about the kinds of people who build nuclear weapons," a screen version of *The Milagro Beanfield War* for Robert Redford and is tentatively set to work with Louis Malle on the film of another of his novels, *The Magic Journey*.

The remarks that follow are from a talk with Nichols in Los Angeles in early September.

—P.S.

There's two million books coming out that write about the same thing—the dope scene, the gurus, the midlife crisis and sexual liberation. My feeling was, since it's such a cliché, why write about it? Then I said, the reason it's a cliché is that it's so prevalent.

But since I don't have a lot of sympathy for that stuff, I didn't want to write the book. Even if

you're writing about your enemies you should have enough compassion for them to create a believable literature. But I had to write *The Nirvana Blues* just to complete the trilogy. It's a protest against the gurufied pizzafication of the nation, creating a homogenous monocultural all-American society and committing cultural genocide. The final vision is a futuristic look at what a nation becomes after something like *The Magic Journey*.

*The Magic Journey* is the important book for me. My intention was to write a straight-forward story of how capitalism functions, the economics of it. *The Magic Journey* is full of people struggling to develop coherent political ideologies, struggling to live ethical and moral lives.

But 90 percent of the society is not doing any of that. *The Nirvana Blues* is about the 90 percent. With Joe Miniver, the main character, I felt it important to use a voice that was close to his, to show the confusion right from inside the bourgeois head—but a head that had some instincts about trying to develop something that was better. The whole tragedy of the book is that he can't do it or that he starts to try to do it much too late.

I hate self-focus. I'm tired of it. *The Nirvana Blues* is about the consequences of self-focus. My character in *The Magic Jour-*

ney, Virgil Leyba, talks about being connected to history. Every morning he wakes up and whether he goes up or down depends on what happened in Pretoria and Teheran and Paris and El Salvador. When you're connected to the globe like that your life is more expansive. Other people's triumphs become your own. Your work matters.

I talk about "armed creativity." I love guys like Dreiser and Dickens, Emile Zola. Farrell's trilogy. I like the attempt at that kind of full, broad social vision of the world. I think the biggest ripoff is that we're all trained to believe that the world's so complicated that we can't understand it. But the people who are running it understand it perfectly and they're just little people like you and me who grew up and went to grade school. We also must learn that the world gets changed by individuals who band together in groups and form communities or armies or whatever and move it in a different direction.

I always start books on a five sentence premise. For my next novel project, I want to write a book based on the rise of industrial capitalism in the U.S.—this enormous project, that begins after the Civil War with the rise of robber barons, the labor movement, immigration, the railroads; the whole mishmash. I've been collecting books for

not to speak English and consequently develops his own private syllabic vocabulary. The satire is multiple in its suggestions and Nichols enhances it by making this moronic figure the baggage man at the bus depot, explaining rules about ticket stubs and suitcases in his impossible gibberish. But once the bus stop encounter is over, Nichols has Egon on his hands for several hundred more pages. And there is no elasticity possible in the character as he is defined.

Incident and story are not the same, and this novel has an abundance of one and an almost total lack of the other. One need not claim wholeness for the middle-class, when Nichols' book is about their empty lives. But the characters require more charity than Nichols seems capable of. I miss a broad endorsement of the impulses aching for satisfaction in these wrongheaded, heartless manners and stratagems.

*The Nirvana Blues* is a strange, distorted, awkward, undependable novel. But it is also unabashed and unashamed, an often brilliant if too often repetitious study of how America has "come up dismally short in the Fulfillment Sweepstakes." It is a book about people who live without history, without a sense of themselves embedded in events, in time, in place, written by a brave and observant historian. It is a calculated piece of mayhem directed at a world too consuming, too much with us, by a man born, as a critic once said of Smollett, with "a skin too few."

*The Nirvana Blues* brings the New Mexico Trilogy to a cacophonous conclusion, like someone saying goodbye by sticking out a tongue. It ends the Chamisaville story on the sourest of notes. As Nichols knows, the book will not endear itself to fans of the earlier stories. But, as Nichols is also aware, this new mischief might bring him a whole new set—even class—of readers. Besides, it's not the moralist's job to be liked. Just read. And right.

Paul Skenazy teaches English at the University of California at Santa Cruz.



## ARCHITECTURE

# The menace of the Moderns.

*A specter is haunting Tom Wolfe—class conflict in the U.S.*

**From Bauhaus to Our House**  
By Tom Wolfe  
Farrar, Straus & Giroux,  
143 pp., \$10.95

By Chuck Lauster

Tom Wolfe was not the first. Robert Hughes in *Time* and his book/PBS series "Shock of the New," and Charles Jencks in numerous books and articles on Post-Modernism, have made a point of debunking the social beliefs of the Modern Movement. Because of their stated commitment to a new industrial society, the Moderns are accused of abandoning the rich history of Western architecture and perpetrating alien new forms constructed of harsh new materials. A photograph of the bankruptcy of the Modern Movement is frequently provided—the dynamiting by the city itself of the crime-ridden Pruitt-Iggo housing block in St. Louis, simultaneously discrediting the style and the social intent.

In his thin history *From Bauhaus to Our House* Tom Wolfe too has a picture of the Pruitt-Iggo blast. Blowing up Pruitt-Iggo would speak to him—it was Modern and public. Wolfe argues ("disaster" perhaps better captures his tone) that the sole origin of European Modern-

two years ago, things like Ida Tarbell on Standard Oil, Matthew Josephson's books on the politicians, books on the labor movement. I'm going to give myself an education in the last 120 years of American history.

People get courage from the memory of things, from ghosts. The sense of time and place, the sense of belonging to a community comes from the ghosts of one's forebears. The Sandinistas marched and took over Nicaragua propelled by a person who had been dead since 1977. The ghosts of DeSoto and Sandino and Eugene Debs and Lucy Parsons and Big Bill Haywood—they're still around and we can call on them.

I don't think you can do much better than to live to a ripe old age and still be whole. There's a coterie of old-timers in Taos like that. The people I admire most are often 80-year-old organizers, people who still can sit all night long trying to convince a group of 25-year-olds that they should be communists or that they should protest the nuclear plant—people who haven't soured.

If anybody was going to grant me one wish in my life it would be to get to the end of it and still be there, pushing. I love guys like Eugene Debs. They did good and they did bad, but they just kept struggling for the point of view of the underdog, and for an ideology that was egalitarian. ■

ism was contempt for the bourgeoisie. This contempt was expressed, hypocritically as he sees it, in socialist, anti-capitalist rhetoric.

Wolfe has no patience with manifestos; he writes the Europeans off as "looney." But American architects, he claims, felt culturally inferior and envied the Europeans their celebrity. Thus, during World War II when Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and other Europeans emigrated to the U.S., their architecture swept the country. Our architecture schools, according to Wolfe, became "compounds" spreading Modernist dogma. The imagery of European worker housing was imposed on our office towers and luxury apartment houses. He finishes with an overview of the "compounds" today and dismisses them all as "academic"—cut off from the popular taste and client control. Looking through a "Marxist mist," Wolfe laments that nowhere in sight is there an architecture "specifically American in spirit."

The specter of class antagonism evidently unnerves Wolfe—he can concede class conflict in Europe but denies it in America. "The bourgeoisie in Europe was the merchant townspeople as opposed to the landed nobility," he said recently. Without a nobility or the tradition of one, the notion of a bourgeoisie loses all meaning." Here we have only the "mob" (his term). The American architect, in Wolfe's view, can only represent his client, never a class.

Wolfe does make a good point in revealing the role of the Museum of Modern Art and its benefactors in transplanting the Modern Movement, pruned of its



Style is everything for Tom Wolfe.

political roots, to this country. As Wolfe tells it, the Museum "was founded in John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s living room, to be exact, with A. Conger Goodyear, Mrs. Cornelius Newton

Bliss and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan in attendance. They had seen their counterparts in London enjoying the chic and excitement of...Le Moderne and were determined to import it to New

York for themselves." (So much for the notion that the U.S. had no "counterpart" to European nobility.)

The Museum's 1932 "International Style" show was accompanied by a catalogue of the same name by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and 27-year-old Philip Johnson. The Museum, the show and the book went to considerable efforts to separate "aesthetic" from "sociological" issues. The large American corporate client was quite willing to use new technology and its European cachet, provided the politics were jettisoned. The "International Style" show did the trick nicely.

## Skeletons.

There is no mention in Wolfe's book of the technology behind the Modern Movement. This is a critical omission because profound changes in construction technology were what triggered the movement. By the last quarter of the 19th century, reinforced concrete and steel construction was being perfected in both the U.S. and Europe. In Chicago columns and concrete slabs replaced walls as the principal means of support by 1885. In Europe Peter Behrens, for whom Mies worked between 1908 and 1909, contributed greatly to the techniques of steel and concrete fabrication. These new means of construction not only permitted vast open spans and little structural restraint, they also allowed open walls to let in light and air.

For the Europeans the Modern Movement was the belief in a new social order wedded to the technology needed to build it. After World War I, the economics of reconstruction lay with the champions of column and slab construction. It was clear in Europe that Beaux-Arts architecture could not house the homeless and that Neo-Classical cities could not be built. The call for a new, progressive architecture went along with left-wing calls for a progressive society.

Democratic Socialist governments in Germany and Holland put a priority on worker housing and commissioned architects who shared that priority, such as Mies, Walter Gropius and J.J.P. Oud. It was Mies who, in 1926, designed the monument to Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, founders of the German Communist Party (monument and party demolished by the Nazis).

Meanwhile, in the U.S., there were no socialist governments, no cities to rebuild and no obvious mission for architecture on the American left. American architecture in the '20s was, for the most part, a continuation of pre-war concerns—technical innovation draped in eclectic, usually historical, styles—and pre-war clients. After World War II, when building was resumed on a large scale, corporate capitalism was ascendant. What impressed the American corporate client was not the imagery of Modernism but its capacity for intense commercial development. Office towers 100 stories tall and with floors over an acre in size were built. The corporate client advocated Modern architecture because it made money; the American architect, lacking an alternative client, could only acquiesce. In arguing that its social commitments soured Modernism in the U.S., Wolfe is dead wrong. It was a studied disconnectedness from social needs that characterized American Modernism—and its client, the American corporation. ■

Chuck Lauster is a New York architect.

## NOTEBOOK

### The Struggle for Black Equality 1954-1980

By Howard Sitkoff  
Hill and Wang, 259 pp., \$6.95  
This is a narrative account of the origins and development of the Martin Luther King-led Southern Christian Council and the more militant Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The narrative ends with King's death and SNCC's move away from non-violent civil disobedience as a primary tactic to Black Power as an articulated goal. The last 10 pages function as an epilogue bringing the reader up to the present. This is a book to hand one's favorite 17-year-old when he or she asks what the civil rights movement was all about. JS

### The State of the World Atlas

By Michael Kidron and Ronald Segal  
Simon and Schuster, 66 maps, \$14.95

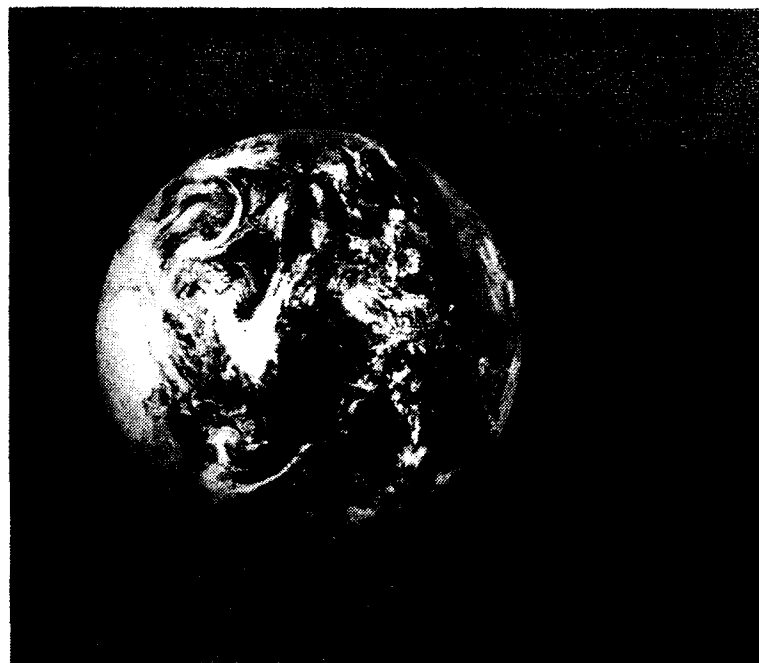
The authors use the political atlas to "show how unequal states are endowed with natural and developed resources, how they employ those endow-

ments and how they are related to the power of private industry and finance"; they follow through by charting crises that ensue from those patterns. The book is irresistible, as clever in its visualization as it is sound in conception. Well-designed, brightly-colored maps on such expectable themes as

mineral resources, infant mortality and caloric intake are impressive. But those on such subjects as pollution, conscientious objection to military service, abortion rights, international labor migration, desertification, weapons export, women workers, refugees and the nationality of transnationals answer questions you might not even have thought to ask. Each page spurs not just thought, but discussion. PA

Contributors: Pat Aufderheide, Jim Steiker.

The whole world is in THE STATE OF THE WORLD ATLAS.





# The Shock of the Old

By Karen Rosenberg



## The avant-garde of the Twenties comes back

1917 will always remain a dividing line in Russian history, but the exhibit of Russian art at the Guggenheim until Jan. 3 shows that the Russian Revolution did not give birth to the cultural avant-garde.

The great change in Russian artistic production began at the tail end of the 19th century and lasted till the late 1920s. It was during this era that artists articulated their vision of a world made anew. Avant-garde artists aimed at nothing less than a revolution in perception. Color, texture, line, form were altered dramatically on canvas and paper, in books and sculpture. The viewer was supposed to be shocked—surprise would reawaken the dormant visual sense.

Implicit in this program is sorrow about the way most people usually use their eyes. As the critic Victor Shklovsky said repeatedly, modern man merely recognizes objects and doesn't really take in their shape or hue. Is this an elitist view? To some extent, yes—the small Russian avant-garde believed that they alone among their countrymen had broken out of visual sleep. Their goal, or course, was always to spread their renewed vision of the world. To this end they organized exhibits, plays and operas and published countless manifestoes.

Their pre-1917 activities generally took place outside of the established cultural institutions. Their exhibitions were often funded by a wealthy patron. And they defined themselves in opposition to the techniques and principles taught in the schools. Vladimir Tatlin, for example, studied only one year at the Moscow College of Paint-

ing, Sculpture and Architecture and then left to work odd jobs as he pursued his artistic inclinations. More than once they struck out in anger against past giants, as if those great artists of history were somehow to blame for becoming Old Masters. "Raphael and Velasquez were declared to be philistines of the spirit, slavishly copying nature, and their works photographs," recalled Benedikt Livshits, one of the Cubo-Futurists.

Yet the brash Cubo-Futurists owed much more to the artistic tradition than they were willing to admit. Their debt to Van Gogh, Cezanne, Gauguin, Matisse and Russian folk art is obvious in the exhibit mounted at the Guggenheim. And were we not still taken in by their assertions of their own novelty, we would probably find other earlier sources of inspiration. The vitriolic, polemical tone of the young suggests that they still cared about their former teachers, about the critics and the bourgeois public. Evidently they still needed the satisfaction of watching their elders wince.

Self-serving hyperbole makes this avant-garde less than fully attractive. These men and women were masters of the self-advertisement. The letters *Cubi* and *Futurismo* appear in Liubov Popova's "Portrait" of 1914-15, on view at the Guggenheim. Not only did she identify with Cubo-Futurism, she was selling it. Ivan Kliun, whose works are widely represented in this exhibit, waxed enthusiastic when describing his own enterprise, Suprematism. Color and paint have "begun to live their own life, to develop freely and to display themselves in the New

Art of Color," he claimed. Kazimir Malevich, whose black square became the icon of Suprematism, was even more enamored of the gift which he had rendered to Art. This practitioner of white on white let it be known that he for one had gone beyond the limitations of color.

Only a few pieces at the Guggenheim stand up to that kind of promise. Olga Rozanova's green stripe on a field of white is one of them. The bold slash of green in the middle of the canvas does indeed demonstrate how powerful the simplest combination of colors can be. The texture of the paint is emphasized by the absence of other distracting elements in the composition. One leaves the canvas feeling one has been reintroduced to the constitutive components of art. Also memorable is Ivan Chashnik's "Suprematist Cross," a painting in black and white in which the contrast of planes is so striking as to be overwhelming. But if one expects all the artists to live up to their own claims, one will probably be disappointed by the collection.

### Out of the basement.

Some historians believe the promise was indeed fulfilled and we just have not seen the masterpieces buried in the basements of Soviet museums, held in private hands, or destroyed since '29 when the movement fell into disfavor in the Soviet Union. This may be overly optimistic. The Guggenheim exhibit does have foreshadowings of the Minimal art of the '60s. But that does not necessarily mean that the Russian avant-garde pursued the concept of minimalism to the point where it

could yield great works. In fact, looking at the variety of styles employed by these artists in a relatively brief period, one begins to doubt that they developed the implications of any one trend. The cult of novelty seems to have led them into a kind of dilettantism.

In truth, we don't know enough to deliver a judgment on this avant-garde. This exhibit represents a significant leap in our knowledge of the era. One is grateful to the mysterious George Costakis who (by means that will probably remain unknown for some time) collected the works in Russia and got at least some of them out. And many thanks are due to Angelica Rudenstine and others at the Guggenheim who are bringing a portion of the Costakis collection in emigration to the public. (The exhibit goes to Houston, Ottawa, Indianapolis and Chicago in the next year before traveling to Europe and Australia.)

But why hasn't the Soviet Union emptied its storehouses into the walls of its museums? In artistic as well as political affairs, the Soviet Union is at least as much afraid of alternatives on the left as of opposition from the right. And this avant-garde presents a much more spiritual conception of revolution than that articulated in the *Short History of the Communist Party of the USSR*. There is more than a little mysticism in the artists' concern with an upheaval in consciousness and in our ways of experiencing color, texture and form. "Non-objective creation is still only the beginning of an unprecedented Great Creation, which is destined to open the doors to

Rodchenko, "Hanging Construction," 1920-21.

mysteries more profound than science and technology," wrote Varvara Stepanova in 1919.

You don't have to read theoretical pronouncements to find the quasi-religious quest for a higher aesthetic order in the universe. It is apparent in the flowing, many-colored shapes of Boris Ender's "The Movement of Organic Form," where one senses the existence of a life force pulsating in space, encircled by gaseous rings. Ivan Kliun's interpenetrating geometrical figures hang in infinity, infused with white which seems a heavenly light. (At any minute one expects to hear the music of the spheres.)

The intelligent lay-out of the exhibit at the Guggenheim makes one source of this mysticism clear: the avant-garde had links with Russian Symbolism, a movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries preoccupied with unseeable but knowable secrets. It appeared in literature in the early poems of Aleksandr Blok and Andrei Bely and in art in the fascinating paintings of Malevich and Kliun from 1904-11, on display in New York. In the Soviet Union, Symbolism has often been called decadent.

The apocalyptic expectations characteristic of Russian Symbolism were carried by the avant-garde into their political thought. The politics of Malevich and Tatlin may best be described as revolutionary utopianism—a vague, left-leaning belief in a better world in which our relationship to art and nature will be transformed. Both orthodox Soviets and American art-for-art's-sake historians—including Margit Rowell, cura-



tor of special exhibits at the Guggenheim—deny that such feelings can properly be called political. There are exceptions, including a few Soviet scholars, most notably Khardzhiev and Trenin, who have given the period a sympathetic hearing. But otherwise, this has been a lost avant-garde in more than one sense. Not only have the works of the participants been hidden or destroyed, the artists' ideas on revolution have generally been ignored or dismissed.

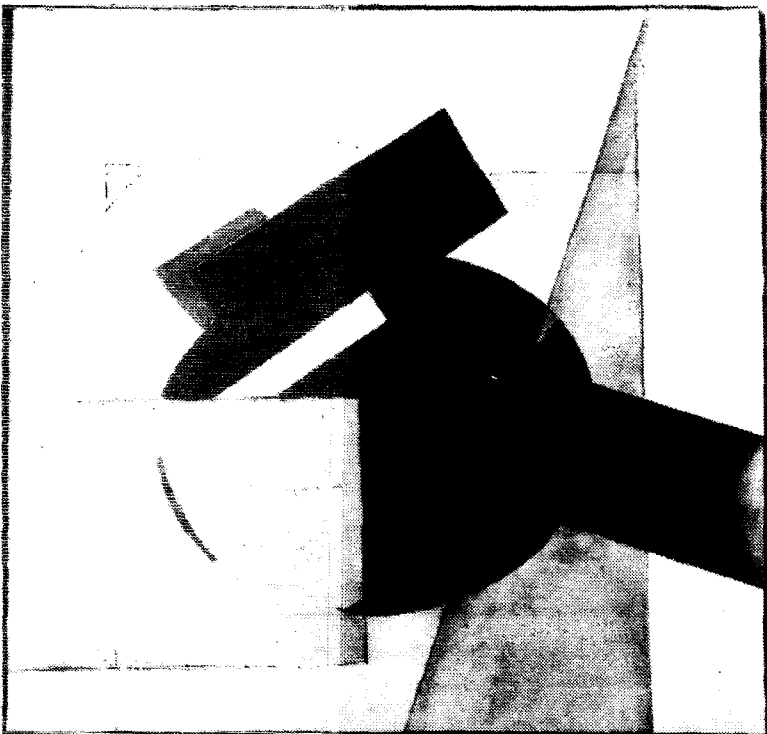
#### High fashion, high treason.

If one takes away the political element in the Russian avant-garde, then one is left with a group that conducted scientific experiments with form. It is this conception of the avant-garde that Western art consumers buy. They see no ironic conflict in hanging a painting with the revolutionary colors of the era, black, white and red, on a town-house wall, until it accrues enough in value to be resold. The Leonard Hutton Gallery on 74th Street and Madison Avenue in New York is selling such a work by Ivan Chasnik, in which

were not socialist realists does not mean that they were not propagandists. After the revolution, they produced posters and designed agit-trains which toured the countryside. But their work is very different from the serious, static billboards in the USSR today. A sense of humor infused their products. El Lissitzky teased the viewer with his drawings which look like architectural plans but, on closer inspection, seem impossible to realize. Much of their propaganda has the same playful quality. Malevich set the slogan "Proletarians of all countries unite" in what looks like a cancelled postage stamp. This was his whimsical "letter" to the Conference of the Committees on Peasant Poverty, which commissioned a program cover. (The rather expensive catalog of the Costakis exhibit translates the text, but no explanations are given on the wall



Ivan Kluin's untitled charcoal and gouache, 1922.



his suprematist cross is set in a triptych, between a black square in a field of white and a red circle in black space; there are also excellent works by Malevich, Lissitzky, Aleksandr Rodchenko and others. Often the reproductions do not do these works justice. "The Work-Clothes of an Actor, No. 7," a costume design by Popova in India ink, gouache and collage, has bolder and more striking colors than I ever imagined. The works on display at the Hutton Gallery begin at \$20,000 and go up, according to the size and date of the item. They're selling revolutionary art by the inch, like cloth.

They sell cloth, too. To the producers and purchasers of high fashion, the ideas of Liubov Popova, Varvara Stepanova and Aleksandra Exter are just potential additions to the wardrobe. How else can one explain the presence of an article on avant-garde Russian clothing on the "Style" page of the Nov. 15 *New York Times*? The garments, reconstructed by Erika Hoffmann-Koenige and produced by a fashion house headed by her husband, pleased some potential consumers who saw them at a show held at the Guggenheim.

The West may cheerfully disregard the import of beautiful shapes, but the Soviet Union has trouble dealing with the avant-garde preoccupation with abstract form. And the launching of an exhibit of the experimental artists of this period would be read as the granting of official approval to abstract art.

To say that the avant-garde

of the museum, which is regrettable).

Unfortunately, one suspects that, given the chance, these young men and women might well have rendered their theories oppressive and constraining. When protected by Lunacharsky, the Soviet Commissar of Enlightenment from 1917-29, the avant-garde tried hard to stamp out its artistic rivals. They fought with fury against realism. The theater became a battlefield where the advocates of cubist and suprematist costumes or set designs fought with the defenders of more traditional decor. (The avant-garde conception of the stage is well illustrated by Popova's set for *The Magnanimous Cuckold*, which was reconstructed for the Guggenheim and looms impressively on the ground floor.) The idea of artistic freedom, which the experimentalists had defended in the pre-revolutionary era, was abandoned in the jockeying for political power.

#### Attack from all sides.

A tragic illiberal tradition in Russian history mars artists as well as czars. The avant-garde was playing a dangerous game and it lost, for a number of reasons. There was the conservative artistic taste of many of the Bolshevik leaders. Bukharin was an exception, but even he later abandoned them. Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, had a hostile reaction to the futurist scenery, a construction of geometrical forms, gates, spears and rope, used in Vsevolod Meyerhold's production of the play *The*

Rodchenko's photomontage of Maiakovsky, on the cover of one of his poetry books.



*Dawn*. Zinoviev was no friend of the avant-garde and supported them only when they opposed his enemies. Their chief defender was Lunacharsky, whose enthusiasm waxed and waned.

But opposition came not only from the top. In 1919 and repeatedly thereafter, Lunacharsky wrote that the workers and sailors who watched revolutionary plays responded negatively to them. This information is credible. Experimental art was not easy to understand without some acquaintance with avant-garde theory, which the Kronstadt sailors obviously lacked. But since no one was conducting trustworthy opinion polls, information is subject to doubt.

Such reports were increasingly taken as fact, however. The idea that the people could be educated to appreciate a new type of artistic experience did not gain currency. Art should be immediately understood by all.

The only question left open was: which of the competing trends could best fulfill this demand?

The avant-garde was trying to stretch the consciousness of the audience. A major point of montage, used effectively by Rodchenko, was to prompt the viewer to make sense of seemingly disparate elements in a composition. This was supposed to be work, even hard work, because the process of interpretation should be familiar to the efforts of the artist. Art was to be the means through which the people could learn that they were creators, not mere receptors.

At best the avant-garde could produce easier works, but not easy ones. Poets and artists made certain compromises. The nonsense syllables such as "gee" and "vee," which floated in Popova's 1915 "Traveling Woman," are not found in her later works at the Guggenheim. Similarly the poet Vladimir

Maiakovsky restrained his penchant for wild neologisms in his propagandistic verse. But the former naughty kids of the avant-garde who had made it their life's work to shock the high-minded establishment could not suddenly get serious just to please powerful Soviet puritans.

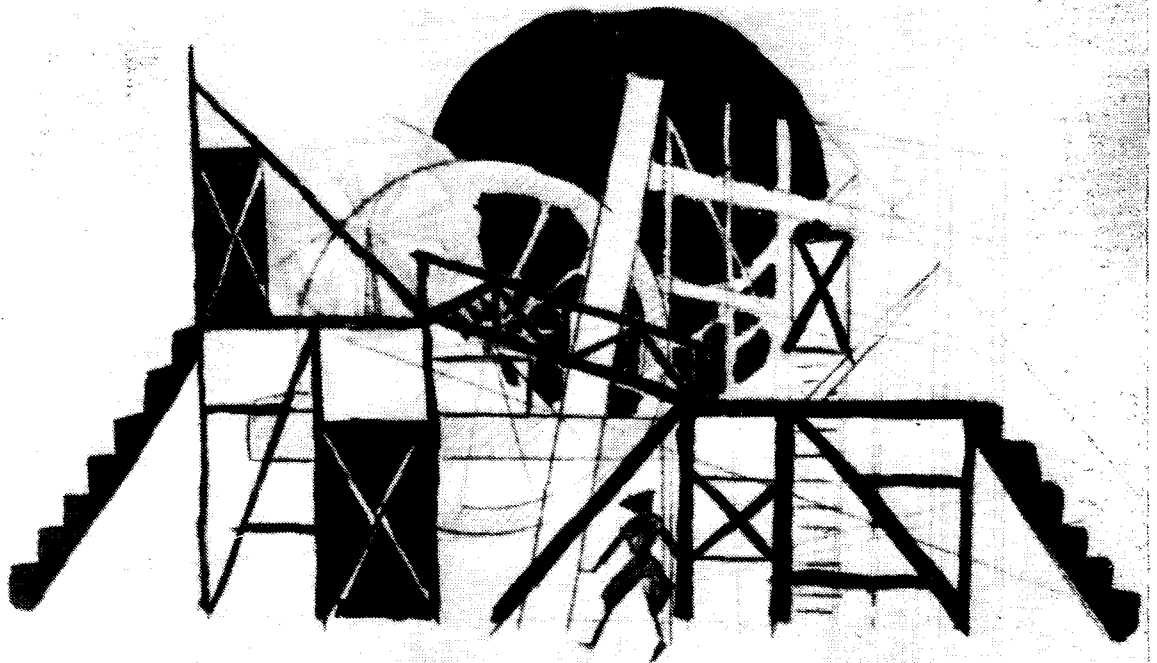
It is this uncontrollable penchant for challenging forms that unites the group of men and women we call the avant-garde. Like most good polemicists, they concentrated on what separated them and took their shared principles for granted. It is easy to become fascinated with the little fights of a period, especially when they are conducted with such passion. But the internal warfare should not obscure the fact that the avant-garde also functioned as a unit. With only a few exceptions, they rose together and fell together. When the poet Maiakovsky killed himself in 1930, it was taken as a statement of the avant-garde as a whole about its inability to transform itself into sober sculptors of easily recognizable positive heroes.

The Guggenheim was probably not particularly interested in the relationship of art to social change when it mounted its exhibit of the Russian avant-garde. But the works on its walls raise that question, willy-nilly.

Karen Rosenberg teaches Russian history at Williams College.

## Reading on the Russians

Many significant works that Costakis brought out of Russia are not shown at the Guggenheim. But they are reproduced in *The Russian Avant-Garde: The George Costakis Collection*, by Angelica Zander Rudenstine, S. Frederick Starr and George Costakis (Harry Abrams, \$60). You can get the highlights of the collection in the catalog of the Guggenheim exhibit, *Art of the Avant-Garde in Russia: Selections from the George Costakis Collection*, by Margit Rowell and Angelica Zander Rudenstine (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, \$17). A recent book about one of the main participants in the Russian avant-garde also deserves mention, because of its marvelous reproductions—*Rodchenko and the Art of Revolutionary Russia*, by David Elliott (Pantheon, \$10). —KR



Liubov Popova's 1922 set design for *THE MAGNIMOUS CUCKOLD* challenged realist designers.



# Rights

Continued from page 13

Cleveland have as much as \$15 million at stake in potential back pay liabilities.

Shong has also abandoned the targeting of industries for stepped-up enforcement efforts. (The banking industry particularly was tagged for special scrutiny by Labor Department investigators after congressional hearings found widespread mistreatment of women and minorities in their employment practices.) Industry-wide targetting enables the agency to concentrate its scarce resources where abuses are most severe. "We just can't get anywhere without targetting," says an OFCCP investigator.

Then, on Aug. 25, Shong issued the latest salvo in the war against affirmative action, proposing new regulations that would reduce the number of firms required to file written affirmative action plans by 75 percent. Business claims that, with fewer regulations, they can create more jobs. But in fact, affirmative action is most crucial in the growth sectors of the economy where jobs are plentiful. The new regulations will exempt most small businesses (those with fewer than 250 employees or \$1 million contracts), ignoring the fact that 80 percent of all new jobs are created in companies with fewer than 100 employees.

The Reagan regulations also ignore the particular plight of women workers who are stuck in dead-end, low-paying jobs. According to a report issued recently by the National Academy of Sciences, some 70 percent of men and 54 percent of women in the labor force are concentrated in occupations dominated by their own sex. The study concluded there is no easy way to close the gap between men's and women's wages "because of the subtle ways the job market and wage structures concentrate women in low-paying jobs." By exempting most companies and eliminating industry-wide targetting, the administration's new rules will exacerbate occupational discrimination just as it is being recognized as a major structural problem in the workforce.

But opposition to the administration's moves has been building. On Oct. 5, representatives of 15 civil rights, labor and women's groups gathered in Washington, D.C., for "Affirmative Action Day." Working Women sent 50 secretaries to speak out in defense of affirmative action on the job. And public comments and letters are running heavily against the proposed new Department of Labor regulations, which are opposed by both the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congresswomen's Caucus.

These efforts have probably helped prevent the worst: the Reagan administration has not destroyed affirmative action outright by issuing a new executive order. The Department of Labor has delayed its plans to abolish back pay. The Justice Department has been forced to back down on its headline-grabbing announcement that it would abandon all statistical goals and quotas by which job discrimination has been defined, proven and remedied in the past.

It has also brought together a wide range of groups concerned about minor-

ity, women's and workers' rights in a working coalition. "This may turn out to be a blessing in disguise," said James Farmer, executive director of the Coalition of American Public Employees, on Affirmative Action Day.

Diana Roose is a staff researcher for Working Women, which has published two reports on affirmative action. They are available for \$3.50 each, from Working Women, 1224 Huron Rd., Cleveland, OH 44115.

## Union

Continued from page 13

ton Working Women gave Mayor Kevin White an award for prohibiting female city employees from wearing pants. Both the Press and White immediately backed down.

Nussbaum, who sees Working Women and District 925 as complementing each other, remains an officer of both. She was interviewed by *In These Times* at the Cleveland headquarters of Working Women.

You talked to several unions before you decided to work with SEIU in forming District 925. Why did you choose SEIU? When we were looking at national unions, SEIU was the only one that was willing to allow us to continue to pursue our strategy, which is that office workers need a self-identity, they need to be organized in ways different from traditional organizing, so we needed autonomy. The thing that made SEIU unique was that they embraced the idea of Working Women rather than wanting to consume it. SEIU agreed with us that the best way to develop a working women's movement was by continuing Working Women as a vital organization.

Why do you need both organizations? The real task is to build a working women's movement. If we have a narrow perspective of trying to get a union here and a contract there, we won't succeed. We have to have a perspective that says, "We want a movement," and by doing that we'll spring more unionization.

What do you think will be the main issue when you start organizing?

Pay is going to be the main issue because it is the most universal and blatant outrage. It's so clear office workers don't make enough to have a decent standard of living. Part of what is so galling about the pay is the lack of respect it shows to the workers.

What kind of standard are you going to use in wage demands? Should clericals make as much as plumbers or as janitors? Maybe plumbers are more skilled. But clericals are paid less than any kind of blue-collar workers. Even within clerical work women get paid \$5,000 less on the average than men. And you have the fact that clerical work is undervalued in relation to jobs held by men—like warehousemen and garage attendants. Those are clearly unskilled jobs. All a warehouseman has to know is the alphabet and have some lifting skills, but he earns a lot more.

Would women be better off if clerical work were sexually integrated the way airline attendant work now is?

No, that always amuses me—that the solution for women and minorities is to let white men have the jobs. I think society has to upgrade the jobs of women without taking them away.

Should there be secretaries at all?

I think there should be secretaries. I don't think that clerical work is on the same order as being a personal valet or servant. It's not that people don't like their jobs—they don't like the treatment they get.

With so much unemployment, a lot of unions are in trouble. How can you expect to begin organizing now?

Our employers can pay. They are still the expanding sector of the economy, and we are the expanding sector of the workforce. We have the leverage, and they have the ability to pay.

Has there been interest in District 925 since its formation was announced?

The appeal of District 925 has been very strong. When we first announced the union, we got a thousand inquiries in the first month. The union was quite surprised. Since we've started campaigns, that impression has been borne out. ■

## Missiles

Continued from page 3

ed. Thus he warned that: "Whether or not the Germans and the French agree to such a negotiation, the very suggestion thereof can cause misunderstanding between them and the United States and serve the purpose of weakening the links between them."

A war scare, with much frantic gesturing towards Soviet SS-20 missiles targeting Western Europe, might have been expected to frighten Europeans away from Soviet temptation and back into the arms of their American protector. While Carter was still president, the U.S., reacting to the fall of the Shah, moved away from detente and from SALT, and in December 1979 got NATO to decide to deploy American Pershing-2 and Cruise nuclear missiles in Western Europe as of 1983.

But that decision, and a series of official American statements indicating readiness to wage nuclear war in Europe, set off an unprecedented movement against the nuclear arms race. Government theatrics, if not yet government policy, are having to adjust.

### The gun at the head.

On Nov. 18, Ronald Reagan gave a speech over satellite television beamed at Europe abruptly reversing administration policy of installing the new missiles no matter what, and promising to "cancel deployment of Pershing-2 and ground launch Cruise missiles if the Soviets will dismantle their SS-20, SS-4 and SS-5 missiles."

For purposes of peaceful image-building and shifting blame to the Russians for eventual installation of the U.S. missiles, it seemed a safe offer. Leonid Brezhnev had called such a trade-off "absurd" and explained at length why the USSR would never accept it in an interview published two weeks earlier in *Der Spiegel*. The

SS-4 and SS-5 missiles were deployed by the USSR 20 years ago to counter the "Forward Based Systems," U.S. medium-range nuclear systems based in and around Europe. The SS-20 is merely a modernization of the obsolete SS-4 and SS-5. The USSR cannot be expected to dismantle them while the U.S. continues to refuse to include the "Forward Based Systems" in arms limitation talks. Brezhnev accused the Americans of deliberately leading the negotiations into a dead end.

Observers who have been paying attention know that Pentagon salesmen periodically open and shut "missile gaps" and "windows of vulnerability" long enough for huge appropriations to pass through Congress into the favored industries. They know that the U.S. always has been and remains far ahead of the USSR in every phase of nuclear weaponry and that every move of the Soviets to try to catch up sets off another U.S. leap ahead, not in search of parity but to escape it and maintain superiority. As Daniel Ellsberg has said, "Our military strategy has been based, ever since the debut of atomic weapons in 1945, on our possible first use of nuclear weapons. Again and again, generally in secret from the American public, U.S. nuclear weapons have been used, in the precise way that a gun is used when you point it at someone's head in a direct confrontation, whether or not the trigger is pulled."

The projected Pershing-2 missiles would provide the U.S. with yet another potential instrument of nuclear blackmail, the most menacing first-strike weapon yet, because poised only five minutes from the Kremlin. The Pershing-2 seems designed to keep the USSR on the sidelines when the U.S. makes military moves into the Middle East, the Gulf area or anywhere else.

Then why doesn't the Kremlin snap up Reagan's offer, however phony, to prevent deployment of an arms system the Russians seem to consider more intolerable than any so far? The answer is not hard to figure out: the Russians are counting on European popular pressure to block stationing of the U.S. missiles. That is probably what the SS-20s are for, what they have always been for: to remind Europeans that their countries cannot be used with impunity as bases for U.S. nuclear attacks on the Soviet Union. This should move the Europeans to moderate the Americans' more aggressive impulses.

In this way the Russians have indeed "taken Europe hostage." While certainly not very nice, this line of conduct may not be aggressive in intent but designed merely to defend the Soviet Union from superior, encircling American military power.

Despite all such efforts to manipulate it, the peace movement is the best thing happening. People are waking up to the kind of world we are living in, forcing leaders to explain themselves and paying more attention to what they say. Passive or active, people are manipulated by governments—only through the self-education of an active movement can they gradually learn how to limit and eventually even put an end to such manipulation. ■

## CALENDAR

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

### December 13

Join Modern Times Bookstore in celebrating its Tenth Anniversary. The celebration will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will include champagne, cake and music. Swingshift, Casselberry and Dupree and Judy Grahn will perform, with Kris Welch as the MC. At Valencia Rose, 766 Valencia Street. General admission is \$4.00/ members \$3.00. For more information call (415) 282-9246.

### January 12-13

Come to Family, Politics and Mass Psychology, a conference to build the Progressive Pro-Family Coalition called Friends of Families. Speeches and workshops will focus on concrete strategies and on drafting a Family Bill of Rights. \$35 in advance/\$45 after Dec. 20th. For Tickets and Information, contact: Friends of Families, 3137 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609. (415) 653-6166.

## DIRECTORY

The Directory is published to facilitate contact with organizations frequently referred to in the pages of *In These Times*. Each organization has paid a fee for its listing.

**Association for Workplace Democracy**  
1747 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009

**The Citizens Party of Illinois**  
109 N. Dearborn, Suite 603  
Chicago, IL 60602  
(312) 332-2066

**The Citizens Party- National Office**  
1605 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009

**Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy**  
120 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, DC 20002

**C.O.I.N.-Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities**

2000 P Street, N.W.  
Suite 413  
Washington, DC 20036

**DSOC-Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee**  
853 Broadway, Room 801  
New York, NY 10003

**Midwest Academy**  
600 West Fullerton Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60614

**National Center for Economic Alternatives**  
2000 P Street, N.W.  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036

**NAM-New American Movement**  
3244 N. Clark St.  
Chicago, IL 60657

**New Patriot Alliance**  
343 S. Dearborn, Room 305  
Chicago, IL 60604

**Socialist Party**  
1011 N. 3rd St., No. 201  
Milwaukee, WI 53203

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for two insertions and \$10.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Bill Rehm.

NEW YORK, NY

### December 11

The New York Institute for Social Therapy & Research speaker series presents "The Organized and the Unorganized: Friends or Foes?" What is the relationship between organized labor and the majority of workers in this country who are unorganized? Enio Carrion, Walter Crawford, Ted Taylor, Emma Jean Walker and Hazel Daren will speak. At Teacher's College, Columbia University, Macey Hall, Room 263, at 8:15 p.m. Donation: \$3.00. For more information call (212) 663-5056.



# CLASSIFIED

## PUBLICATIONS

**GAY COMMUNITY NEWS**—National weekly. News of Lavender Left; international gay news. Feminist, non-profit. \$8/12 issues. GGN, Dept. INT, 22 Brimfield St., Boston, MA 02108.

**READ IN THESE TIMES** reprints. David Moberg's 24-page "Shutdown" reviews the catastrophic effects of plant closings and offers provocative alternatives. Great for classrooms, organizing or just reading. \$1.50 each; to: ITT, Box A, 1509 N. Milwaukee, Chicago 60622.

**GUATEMALA: CRUICH** Martyred; Catholic/Protestant church statements; \$3. P.O. Box 14051, Minneapolis, MN 55416.

**U.S.-VIETNAM** TBS urged on Capitol Hill: Congressional Conference Report, send \$2 to Fund for New Priorities, 122 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10017.

**PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR** Read and distribute "Protest and Survive." New 210-page book contains powerful chapters by Edward P. Thompson, Daniel Ellsberg and others. Price \$4.95. Organization orders: 10 or more—40% discount. Individual orders: \$4.95 (includes postage). Send check with order to Monthly Review Press, Dept. 1, 62 West 14th St., New York, NY 10011.

**WRITING FOR WORKING AMERICA** Many original stories, poems, illustrations both by and about working men and women. Reviews of: a socialist detective novel, hospital stories, I.A.M. Media Project. Single copies \$3.00. Main Trend, Box 344 Cooper Station, NY, NY 10003.

**FREE** Anarchist catalog, Solid of Liberty, P.O. Box 7058, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

**GRAB IT!** If you don't already subscribe to In These Times, why not begin now? Our low introductory rates will grab you—one year for only \$19.50 or six months for just \$10.95. See the ad in this week's issue.

## Al Staats & Associates

Management & marketing consulting firm serving the public interest community. Specializing in publishing and organization development, direct mail & media outreach. For more information, write: ASA, 541 W. Cakdale, Suite 401, Chicago, IL 60657; 312-935-0648.



green on tan, yellow, or it blue 1600 each (post. paid) sizes small to X large

glues to the military



black on red, tan, it blue 1600 each (post. paid); sizes small to X large



black on tan, red, it blue or yellow, 1600 each (post. paid); sizes small—X large

Also available:  
**IF I CAN'T DANCE I Don't Want to be Part of Your Revolution** (w/graphic of Emma Goldman)  
**QUESTION AUTHORITY** (black, red or blue)  
**EAT THE RICH** (red only)  
plus lots of buttons too send \$34 for catalog

Mail to: Box 077  
Northernman Merchandising  
1519 E. Franklin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

## HELP WANTED

**OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**, Campaign for Political Rights. Office management, bookkeeping, personnel supervision; some fundraising, outreach. Salary \$11,000-\$13,000 depending on experience. Women and minorities encouraged. Send resume: Campaign for Political Rights, 201 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

**DIRECTOR**—Statewide citizen action group. Energy, environment, consumer issues. \$14,000-\$16,000/year. COPIRG, 1315 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302.

**CANVAS DIRECTOR**—9 to 5, Boston's Working Women's Organization seeks a Canvasser Director. Extensive experience canvassing required. Knowledge of issues and organization preferred. Salary negotiable. Call (617) 536-6003. Resumes including three references should be sent to: Joan Quinlan, 9 to 5, 140 Clarendon St., Boston, MA 02116. No later than Dec. 15.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**—Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City. Coordinates not-for-profit home improvement financing and 1-4 family rehab program operating in 7 NYC neighborhoods. Reports to a Board of Directors. Requires knowledge of housing, demonstrated competence in planning, budgeting, fundraising, staff supervision and ability to interact creatively with community, government and financial leaders. Minimum—Bachelors degree plus four years experience. Starting salary \$32,000. Send resume to: Neighborhood Re-Investment Corp., 1500 Broadway, Suite 800, NYC 10036, Attn: Personnel Committee. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

**COORDINATOR**, nationally focused PR campaign for national safe energy media organization. Knowledge of safe energy/nuclear issues; media experience; public interest experience. \$18,000/yr. Resume to: P.O. Box 4964, Washington, DC 20036.

## BUTTONS, POSTERS, ETC.

"LET THEM EAT JELLYBEANS."



We are currently offering **Northern Lights** and **The War at Home** at a 10% discount. Excellent for organizing, classrooms, fundraisers, workshops, rallies, etc. Cassette or 16mm. Rent or purchase New Front Films 1409 Willow Street Minneapolis, MN 55403 (612) 872-0805



**"Radiation on the Job: A Manual for Health Care Workers on Ionizing Radiation"** 57 pp

is available from LLRP/CMRW, 1638-B Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117 at \$2.75 per copy.

Because of the tremendous use of medical radiation, most health workers will be exposed in the course of their work—many without knowing it. Topics covered include: health effect of radiation; recent studies; how to identify hazards; legal rights and contract language. Written by health workers.

"The Moral Majority Is Neither," "Member—Immoral Minority," "Unemployed," "Impeach Reagan." "Pro Choice." Buttons: 2/\$1.00; 10/\$4.00; 50/\$15.00; 100/\$25.00. Ellen Ingber, Box 752-T, Valley Stream, NY 11582.

**BUTTONS/BUMPERSTICKERS** Custom-printed (union shop). Lowest Movement prices for 20 years! Largest variety anti-nuclear and other fund-raising items in stock. Free catalog...call (516) 791-7929. Larry Fox, Box M-8, Valley Stream, NY 11582.

**SELF-STICKING, SMALL LABELS** to post everywhere: "The Moral Majority Is Neither"; "This Promotes Women Hating"; "This Insults Women"; "Stop Racist Attacks" (tri-color); "U.S. Out of El Salvador"; "Stop the Arms Race Not the Human Race"; "Don't Buy British Products" (with list & phone number). \$1/twenty (OK to mix); \$20/roll of 1,000 (same). Donnelly/Colt, Box 271-IT, New Vernon, NJ 07976.

## RESOURCES

**THE SHALOM NETWORK** invites your participation in the second observance of Chanukat Shalom, a week of Jewish Middle East peace activities taking place during Chanuka, Dec. 21-28. A resource packet (including Israeli and Palestinian poetry, a special candle lighting, appropriate readings for a service, a bibliography, film list) is available.

## Guild Books & Periodicals

1118 W. Armitage  
Chicago, Ill. 60614  
(312) 525-3667

Literature • History • Politics  
Art • Women & Minority Studies  
Wide Selection—Periodicals  
& Records • Books in Spanish  
Come in and browse.

organize!

Gray Sweatshirts  
blue logo  
SM. MED. LG. X-LG.  
\$12.50 ppd.  
bulk rates available  
C.S.P.  
Box 48  
Paplar Ridge, N.Y. 13139

IT'S TURKEY TIME!



**POLITICAL POSTERS & TEE SHIRTS**  
catalog \$1 (refundable with order)  
**RED PEPPER**  
P.O. Box 11308-T  
San Francisco CA 94101

able by remitting \$5.00 to the Shalom Network, c/o Bria Chakofsky, 2503 34th Ave., South, Seattle, WA 98144.

**LATIN AMERICA SLIDESHOWS**—rental \$15.00/week, purchase \$50. "Central America: Roots of the Crisis" looks at Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala. "Vieques, Guatamala Earthquake: Agony & After," "Guatemala: A People Besieged," "Chile: Four Women's Stories." American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 241-7159.

## ATTENTION

**MOVING?** Let In These Times be the first to know. Send us a current label from your newspaper along with your new address. Please allow 4-6 weeks to process the change. Send to: In These Times, Circulation Dept., 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622.

## FOR SALE

**CHORAL MAJORITY SINGS OUT!** Gay, left hymns and carols harmonize and organize. Tape \$5.50, Hymnal \$3.00. 964 Valencia, SF, CA 94110.

**RUBBER STAMPS!** Hundreds of irresistible images, from armadillos to zeppelins. Our incredible catalog \$1.50. Rubber Stamps of America, Box 67-I, Saxtons River, VT 05154.

**GIFT!** African cookbook. 38 tantalizing recipes. \$5.50, \$8.50 postage. Tanti-Ama, Box 1346, Madison, WI 53701.

## GIFTS

HAVING TROUBLE? Can't find the

## MODERN BOOKSTORE

407 S. Dearborn St. Suite 230  
Chicago, IL 60605  
312/663-9076



Midwest's widest selection of Marxist literature on Black & Labor History, Women, The Socialist World, Africa, Philosophy, Economics, Literature, etc. In English, Spanish & Persian.

Mon. thru Sat. 10-6

**YOU CAN LEAD A MAN TO KNOWLEDGE... BUT YOU CAN'T MAKE HIM THINK**

**E-MC?**

FRONT BACK

SM, MED, LG, & X-LG, SHIRTS RED ON GOLD, TAN OR LIGHT BLUE.

\$7.00 ea. send check or money order to:

Xone Distributors  
T-Shirt Division  
P.O. Box 2061  
Rockville, Md. 20852

right gift? Why not give 42 gifts to your friends and family this year? In These Times gift subscriptions are easy and cheap. Check the ad in this week's issue.

## NEW VOICES, NEW PERSPECTIVES: SOCIALIST-FEMINIST WRITINGS

Two discussion bulletins are now available that examine a range of current issues from a socialist-feminist perspective. They were produced by Solidarity, a national socialist-feminist network.

The 1981 bulletin on socialist-feminism covers, among other topics:

Community Programs for Women/ Building the Reproductive Rights Movement/ Organizing Office Workers/ The Lavender Left Representative pieces from the winter 1981-82 issues include:

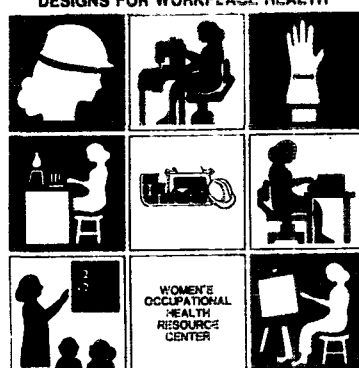
Social Democracy in the Labor Movement/ Perspectives on Pornography/ Feminists Against Racism/ Nicaragua Two Years After

Order either Solidarity discussion bulletin (1981 @ \$3.95, winter '81-82 @ \$4.95) from:

Bulletin Coordinator  
4360 23rd Street  
San Francisco CA 94114

SOLIDARITY A SOCIALIST FEMINIST NETWORK

## WORKING WOMEN: DESIGNS FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH

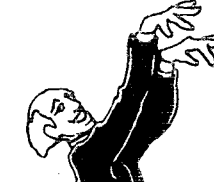


**1982 Factpack/Wall Calendar**  
Designed to become a permanent resource on Women's Occupational Health. 12 beautiful photos: informative factsheets ONLY \$5.00 order from: WOHRC, 60 Haven Ave., B-1, N.Y., N.Y. 10032. Write for information on bulk orders.

## GIVE A GIFT OF LOVE AND CHANGE

Albums  
& Cassettes  
By **HOLLY NEAR**

Including her newest release **FIRE IN THE RAIN**. Also, **IMAGINE MY SURPRISE! YOU CAN KNOW ALL I AM**. A LIVE ALBUM AND HANG IN THERE. Look for them in local stores or send \$8 (includes postage) to: Redwood Records, Box 996, Dept. T, Ukiah, CA 95482. Cal residents add 6% tax. We can mail your gifts for you.



## CONCERT TYPOGRAPHERS

"Virtuoso performance on the Compugraphic"

We've changed our name, but we're still fast, cheap and accurate. And we've got many new type faces to choose from. Whatever your typesetting needs are—from business cards to book manuscripts—we'll guarantee our work to your satisfaction.

For estimates, references and scheduling, contact: Jim Rinnert, Concert Typographers, 1509 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622. (312) 489-4447

## SUPPORT PATCO!

Buy one of our t-shirts. All shirts are white with black lettering and cost just \$5.50 each. All sizes (S,M,L,XL) are in stock and bulk orders are available. Proceeds go to PATCO locals. Send your check payable to Gary Wolfe to: Gary Wolfe, 8730 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22309.



Write your own classified ad here:

**Classifieds**  
45¢ per word prepaid  
**Special Discounts**  
3-9 insertions 40¢ per word  
10-19 insertions 35¢ per word  
20+ insertions 30¢ per word  
**Send to:**  
1509 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60622



It may take a million dollars  
to get a condo apartment in Beverly  
Hills, but you could get a free  
Rolls-Royce as a door prize.

# Rooms at the Top

By Richard B. Marks

L O S A N G E L E S

While affordable rental housing is becoming more and more difficult to find in Los Angeles, vast amounts of foreign and domestic capital are being poured into building an instant high-rise ghetto for the superrich on Wilshire Boulevard. The newest chapter in the saga of "the fabulous boulevard" with its Miracle Mile of the '40s is the Billion Dollar Mile of the '80s.

Also known as the Golden Dipper or more blandly as the Wilshire Corridor among real estate people, this strip has always been a well-to-do area, but nothing like into what the developers want to transform it. Even just five years ago there were still many of the old low-rise apartment houses with moderate rents attracting elderly tenants of which some could still remember when Wilshire first got paved.

Then about four years ago condominiums began with apartment conversions. The first condos on Wilshire had top prices of about \$200,000. The top price in the new generation of buildings is \$11 million for a penthouse. Units are rarely smaller than 1,600 square feet, but the average size is about 3,000 square feet and the average price is about \$1 million. Consider that four small one-bedroom apartments can easily fit into one 2,000-square-foot living room. Many of the units have closets easily the size of the average citizen's living room.

It's more than size alone: the luxury is staggering. The black granite for the lobby of Wilshire House is reputed to have cost a cool million. The developer offers a free Rolls

Royce to the buyers of her penthouses. But only one of two has sold so far and that's to someone who already owns four of the luxury cars: he will settle for the equivalent price in a decoration allowance.

Another of the buildings turned out a large-format brochure called "The Art of Living" filled with vintage photographs and costly color engravings evoking the consumer excesses of yesteryear. The developers of this building, the Wilshire-Thayer, say that its theme is "understated elegance" and they are courting buyers who come from "old money"—whatever that means in Los Angeles. Of course, the real appeal is to the recently rich who want to make a show of not making a show.

The security systems for the Wilshire condos are right out of science fiction. "We consider our building a fortress providing a safe home for one's Rembrandts and Picassos," says Jody Sherman, the developer of Wilshire House. The crawl space for plumbing, electric lines and air conditioning ducts between the floors will be loaded with electric sensors, as will all other parts of the building. If touched they signal the head of security, who can watch the intruder on video monitors and talk with him or her through the intercom speakers throughout the building.

Tenants can wire not only their art works and jewelry to the security system, but also themselves. If the tenant has any real or imagined health problem there is a button to signal the security guards. For those with really big worries there's a general panic button.

Who wants to live in a place like this? So far nobody knows—the market is totally untested. Developers expect buyers to be in their 50s on the average, many of them unmarried women. Many have lived in large houses in luxurious nearby areas like Bel-Air and Beverly Hills, and will become "real estate rich" when they sell their homes. The problem the Wilshire developers face is that many of these buyers can't buy a new home until they sell the old one, and very few million dollar homes are selling right now.

The developers are also looking overseas for money. Los Angeles is getting to be a haven for *emigres* from Italy where personal ostentation could lead to a kidnapping, and England where showiness is considered to be in bad taste. But it is still *de rigueur* to squander wealth publicly here in L.A.

To date though, the developers' hopes for foreign buyers remain just that: hopes. For example, on July 6, 1981, a spokesman for the Robert Charles Lesser Company, architectural market consultants for several developments on the boulevard, told me that they hoped that the election of Mitterrand would make many a wealthy Frenchman seek a *pied a terre* on the Billion Dollar Mile. Two weeks later the same spokesman announced that they had heard from prospective French buyers who wanted to move, supposedly because of the change in government. But at the same time the French firm of Najar Development, which is building L'Elysee on Wilshire, had stopped its advertising campaign in France because they felt it was not a fitting time to encourage leaving the country.

Astronomical prices—the average is now about \$300 per square foot—are considerably

less than the equivalent real estate in London, Paris or Tokyo. Foreigners are also favorably disposed to investing in these projects because our interest rates are favorable to them—the going rate of interest for Mexico City Real Estate is 37 percent. Also, the costs of construction are lower here: it costs half as much to build a high rise in Los Angeles as it does in Tokyo.

No reporter knows who really has bought any of the ultra-luxury units. Developers quote data from market research rather than sales figures. In one building 20 units that were supposedly sold were actually bought by one of the original investors to sell to contacts in Mexico City. Very few escrows have been secured.

American banks are hesitant to invest in these projects. Never have high-density units been planned with so much space and opulence. How many people are there who need hallways large enough to double as art galleries? At least one of the buildings is stalled—only the steel frame is up at the work site—because of financing problems. Some real estate people say that the prices of the units will have to drop before they can sell. For that reason there might have already been some intentional price raising to give false signs that the market is healthy. In little more than half a year, Jody Sherman has doubled the prices of her units at Wilshire House from \$750,000-\$5 million to \$1.5-\$11 million.

Environmentalists, local homeowners in Westwood and renter's groups claim that huge condos are white elephants and that 850 of them will be glut. But the profit margin for these projects (they cost only about \$175 per square foot to build) is so high the developers can't lose. Even if they have to take a price cut or remain the same despite inflation, profits will remain high.

Right now the biggest profits for developers are in high-density urban housing. Not, however, in rental housing but in high-priced condominiums. There's no need to deal with tenants and rent controls. Of course, the homeowners will have to deal with each other. A publicist for several of the new Wilshire projects admitted to me that he would not like to be around for the first homeowners' meeting at any of the new buildings: "Can you imagine a room filled with 80 snotty millionaires, each expecting to have his own way?"

Richard Marks lives in West Hollywood and frequently writes about real estate.